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MADEMOISELLE MORI:

A TALE OF MODERN ROME.

Margaret Roberts, 1833-1913.

MADEMOISELLE MORI:

A TALE OF MODERN ROME.

'D'abord je suis *femme*, avec les devoirs, les affections, les sentiments d'une femme; et puis je suis *artiste*.'

MADAME VIARDOT GARCIA.

'Come, make a circle round me, and mark my tale with care,
A tale of what Rome once hath borne, of what Rome yet may bear.'

MACAULAY.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LX.

AUTHOR'S EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE words of an accomplished singer, 'D'abord je suis *femme*, avec les devoirs, les affections, les sentiments d'une femme ; et puis je suis *artiste*,' may be taken as the text on which the following tale has been composed. Irene Mori is an ideal who arose before the mind of the writer among fair scenes and on classic ground, at a time when recent events in the history of Rome had a vivid interest for the spectator.

The beauty and interest of Ancient Rome have been long the theme of travellers, poets, and historians, and it is an interest that can never be forgotten ; but now a new one is springing up there. Besides the dead Past, there is a living Present, and the aim of the following pages is to give some description of the thoughts and feelings that stir Modern Rome ; and some picture of that every-day life in the Eternal City, which would not be more wonderful, more beautiful, or more interesting than every-day life elsewhere, if it were not that it has been of late years marked by some touch of heroism, and that it may ere long be so distinguished again.

It is matter of history, that when once a race has fallen below a certain point it can rise no more. Whether the Italian people have sunk to this point is a question that, in

the course of a few years, must have its answer. A new spirit has gradually risen among them ; they have dared and suffered, and they are ready to dare and suffer again, if so they may purchase liberty. They are not like the Spaniards, willing to acquiesce in insignificance, and content to have no place among the nations. They are gasping and struggling for life.

We, in our island home, are, as a people, brought little in contact with other nations. We have a strong, busy, national life, which fills our heads and hearts, and gives full scope to our activities. Our sympathies are apt to be narrowed to the measure of our own concerns, and it has been truly said of the Englishman that 'foreign affairs, in his normal state, he views with indifference.' Now and then this indifference is thawed, and our sympathies are roused by the course of events to take a wider range. The Italian revolution of 1848–9 awakened an interest amongst us that has not died away, and drew our earnest attention to Italian politics. The best historical account of those revolutions, Farini's *Stato Romano*, has been translated into our language, by the accomplished pen of an English statesman ; and time has enabled us to appreciate the truthfulness of a work which we were at first inclined to call in question. At the present epoch, the scenes in which the following tale is laid may give it a peculiar interest. It was written among those who had taken an active share in them. Some of the incidents described in it will be recognised as real occurrences, such as the murder of the two supposed spies by the populace ; the attendance of the Roman ladies at the hospitals during the siege ; the existence of the child regiment called *la Speranza*, the flight and pursuit of the traitor, and

his rescue by the eloquence of a priest. But the writer is far from presenting this slight work of fiction as a picture of all that Rome did and suffered in 1849. It is but a sketch of the way in which private lives are affected by convulsions in the whole body politic, and private hopes made shipwreck in the tempests that shake the State.

If the fortunes of the *dramatis personæ* of this story should awaken some feelings of pity for those who have been much oppressed, some admiration for those who have fallen in a good cause, and some sympathy for the future fortunes of the Roman people, the writer's end will have been accomplished.

May, 1859.

MADEMOISELLE MORI.

CHAPTER I.

Thou art in Rome! the city that so long
Reigned absolute, the mistress of the world.
Rogers.

One Sunday evening in October, the English congregation were pouring out of the room which served them as a church, outside the Porta del Popolo. The English season at Rome had just begun. A long file of carriages was waiting, and they successively came up to the door, and drove off, either to various residences, or to the Pincian Hill. The walkers turned into the gardens of Villa Borghese, the gates of which stood invitingly open close at hand; or crossed the Piazza, and fell into the crowd in the three streets branching from it. Some ascended the Pincian Hill, which the Italians, ever dreading the unhealthy hour of sunset, were already leaving; so that there was a double stream of vehicles and foot-passengers, one descending and the other ascending, the winding way. Ample as the road was, it hardly contained the crowds tempted out by the fine afternoon to this charming place, once the *Collis Hortulorum*, and still a region of gardens, as much as in the days of Sallust and Lucretius.

If the piazzas and streets below had not been equally crowded, all Rome might have been supposed on the Pincio. Languages from all parts of the world were heard there; foreigners and natives were blended together. Here, a magnificent Armenian prelate walked, with stately air and flowing beard, beside a white-robed Dominican. There, a group of Americans, of English, of Germans, passed by. Here, again, a Frenchman ex-

changed no very friendly glances with a slender, dark Italian. Now, all the crowd pressed hastily together into the angles of the road, as a carriage, containing two Italian ladies reclining luxuriously in it, dashed along. Nurses, distinguished by their crowns of bright ribbon and long silver pins; priests in their various habits, were conspicuous and abundant; but in the whole throng there was hardly a Roman from the country; all on the Pincio were inhabitants of the city, and no particular *festa* had called the dwellers in the Campagna into Rome. It was only such a crowd and such a scene as may be witnessed on the Pincian Hill on any fine Sunday in autumn.

Amongst those of the English congregation who made it their way home from church were a young brother and sister, followed by a spaniel, which had been waiting for them at the door. As they mingled with the crowd, their appearance was so foreign and their Italian so pure, that no one would have supposed them to be English, though the boy's tall, slender figure and bright complexion were unlike those of a Roman. They paused for a few moments in an angle of the wall, looking down into the gardens below, whence the warm, perfumed breath of the China roses came up in gusts, and where lizards and butterflies coquetted together. A carriage passed, and a lady in it remarked them, and asked her companion who they were, saying, 'If I had not seen them in our church, I should have taken them for Italians.'

'So they are, in fact. I do not know much about them, but I believe the father was a young English artist, who married a Neapolitan girl. I suppose he met with her in some expedition into *il Regno*, as they call Naples. I remember seeing a portrait of her once when we went to his studio, and a beautiful creature she must have been — with one of those pure Greek faces which you see at Sora or Capri. She died, and left him this girl and boy; and some one said the other day that he was dead too.'

'How do they live?'

'I do not know; on the boy's earnings, probably. Oh, you do not know how little people can live on here, or you would not look incredulous. Yet I sometimes think that poverty is worse here than in England; there are so many families who once were

better off, and are going steadily down hill. And it is so hopeless. What can one do?'

'Ah, the priests dislike the English helping or visiting their people?'

'Oh, some do, and some do not. Some are glad to let their people get part of the alms at the English church; others would not hear of it.'

'Do you see anything of the poor here?'

'I did, when I first came here, with my English notions; but it is so disheartening, the cases are so endless and so hopeless. And it is a most unfortunate thing to get the name of being charitable, one has no peace — and then one gets so shockingly imposed upon. I do assure you, Mrs. Dalzell, you would not believe me, if I told you the frauds that people, as well off as you or I, will practise to get a few pauls. I am quite in earnest; the spirit of independence, or honesty either, is entirely wanting here. And then I know that the people take what one gives, and hate one all the time as something worse than a pagan. They call converts from our Church to theirs *Nuovi Cristiani*, New Christians. Religion is, of course, a forbidden subject, and I have lost all heart, and feel sure I am being taken in when an Italian talks me into being charitable. I have learnt to resist their pathetic entreaties at last. Ah, you look dissatisfied; but if ever you live here, you will find philanthropy to be all very well in theory but mightily disagreeable in practice at Rome.'

Mrs. Dalzell made no reply, and bent forward to look at the road, some turns of which now lay below them. She distinguished the brother and sister again, slowly ascending in the throng, and asked if they had been brought up as Protestants.

'I suppose so. Yes, they must be Protestants, for Italian Romanists are strictly prohibited from setting foot within our church. The boy is a handsome fellow, is he not? I should like to know if they have any friends here. Well, we must drive down, or you will miss the *table d'hôte*. I wonder why Italian women will wear white bonnets! Did you see that one? Frightful, is it not? Have you decided on going into lodgings?'

'My old friend, Madame Marriotti, recommends me to do so.'

Meanwhile, the boy and girl had reached the door of the French Academy, and instead of following the stream of promenaders to the gardens above, they went in, and asked the porter for the key of the Bosco, which was given, and they entered a grove of ilexes, whose gloomy shade effectually shut out the radiant sunshine that still illuminated the western sky.

'Now the bread, Vincenzo,' said the girl, in Italian; 'see, see, there he is,' and she held out her hands caressingly to a white goat, which was browsing amid the rank herbage, and feigning to take no notice of them. 'Come! *vien, vien qua!* Oh, see the creature!' as the spaniel, which had been racing in another part of the wood, came into sight, and the goat, startled out of coquettish indifference, gave an extraordinary caper, and rushed upon him. Vincenzo and his sister were too much overcome with laughter to interfere in the duel, which ended with the dog's taking refuge between his owners, while the goat pirouetted indignantly at a little distance.

'Come, if we are to see the sunset we must make haste, Irene,' said Vincenzo; 'Nanna will certainly think we are lost, and eat the *ricotta* all herself. What are we going to have for supper? Come, tell me!'

'You greedy boy! Don't suppose I shall tell you. Nanna would never forgive me if I spoiled her treat in that way.'

'How she must rack her good old head every *festa* to get the something to make us a surprise,' said Vincenzo, as they advanced towards a long and exceedingly steep flight of steps, leading up a high mound clothed with ilexes. 'I believe it is what she thinks of from one holiday to another.'

'And I think of what you are doing in the studio. Ah, Vincenzino, when you are a great sculptor!'

'Ah, when!' repeated her brother. 'Do you remember the sculptor who sold nothing for fourteen years? Fourteen years of working and waiting, and hoping and despairing, Irene!'

'And we can work, and wait, and hope too, but not despair,' said Irene, eagerly. 'Fortune came at last to him, and so it will to us — and any way, you must be a sculptor.'

'Ay,' said Vincenzo, looking out on the magnificent view which now lay before them as they attained the miniature temple on

the top of the mound and above the wood, 'it is not for the fame or the fortune; it is for itself, Irene!'

Both stood still, side by side, gazing silently on the city, where dome and bell-tower stood out against a sky of gold; the desolate Monte Mario and its stone pines rising dark to the right. Behind, close at hand, were sombre ilex woods, amid which rose here and there the spire of a cypress or a ruined arch, and on the highest point, the white Villa Ludovisi; beyond, stretched the Campagna, girdled by hills melting into light under the evening sky.

'It is something to be a Roman,' said Vincenzo, at last.

'And a Roman sculptor,' added his sister.

'You must come to the studio some day, Irene; I want to show you my copy of the *Flora*. I can tell you, it was a great honor to be chosen to make it. Alberti had no time, or else I don't suppose Signor Trajano would have chosen me. Ah! the light is going.'

'*Ave Maria* when you hear, look you that your house be near,' said Irene, quoting a familiar Roman proverb; 'but before we go, can you get me that bit of *smilace?* See,' she added, pointing to a graceful plant wreathed round a neighboring ilex. 'There, see that bough; it will look beautiful round Santa Lucia, and you could copy it for a frame.'

'I see; stand out of the way,' said Vincenzo, advancing to the side of the flight of steps which was undefended by railing or balustrade. He leant lightly forward, stretching his lithe figure as far as he could, and reaching after the plant, while Irene ran down the steps so rapidly, that she came headlong into the arms of a stranger, as he turned a corner of the mound, and was about to ascend. Her exclamation made Vincenzo start upright to see what had occurred. He set his foot on a pebble which chanced to be on the step, slipped, lost his balance, strove in vain to recover himself, and fell down the whole flight of steps with frightful violence. He lay as if dead for some minutes, and when Irene wildly implored him to speak — to look at her — and the stranger, who had innocently caused the disaster, raised him, he only answered by faint moans of pain. Presently he recognised his sister, uttered her name, and tried to rise with

the help of the stranger; but the suffering caused by the movement showed that serious injury had occurred. The stranger asked, first in French and then in tolerable Italian, where he felt hurt.

'My back,' he answered in a faint whisper; then, perceiving Irene's terror, 'Don't be frightened, only I cannot walk home yet.'

Nor could he endure to be carried when they tried to lift him.

'You are Italian! Where do you live? Let me get a carriage for you; I fear you must wait here awhile, but I will make all possible speed. My name is De Crillon, Colonel de Crillon,' said the stranger, laying the poor boy's head tenderly upon Irene's lap.

She thanked him by a look. He hastened away, and she sat waiting while the weary time passed on. The gloom of the ilexes deepened; the sun had set, and the rapid Italian night was come. The bell of the neighboring convent rang for the *Ave Maria*, but still no one came to the help of the two poor children. Vincenzo was too much exhausted by pain to continue the comforting words which he had at first tried to speak; his breath came feeble and fluttering; Irene was dumb with fear and grief, and sat with tears rolling down her cheeks, and one arm passed closely round the neck of her dog, as if even his presence was a comfort, and the other hand on Vincenzo's damp forehead. A rustle gave her hope, but no one came; it was but the white goat come to peer inquisitively at them. It seemed as if hours had passed; all was still again — surely all the world had forgotten them; yet it was not so very long in reality before voices and steps came near, and Colonel de Crillon hurried up.

'My poor friend! Have you been in much pain? Every carriage was engaged; I could not find one. Here is something, at last, and these good men will carry you very carefully. Here, my men, lift him gently, gently — that's it,' as by his gesture rather than by his foreign Italian they comprehended, and laid the boy in a sheet which they had brought with them. But no tenderness could save Vincenzo from anguish which wrung irrepressible moans from him even while he gasped out, 'It's nothing; don't

mind, Irene,' and the transit over the rough pavements was a trial that ended in actual fainting.

Colonel de Crillon accompanied them to their dwelling, and bade Irene hasten up-stairs to warn her friends and prepare a bed to receive Vincenzo at once. There was no one to warn except the old servant who had nursed them, and who, as Irene ran up to the rooms they occupied on a third floor, came to the top of the staircase, with indignant voice uplifted to a shrill shriek —

'Oh! terrible children! Do you wish to kill me with sorrow? Is this an hour? Child! what has happened?' suddenly perceiving Irene's frightened aspect.

'Oh! Vincenzo has fallen down the steps of the Bosco,' answered Irene, amid choking tears; 'they are carrying him up-stairs now.'

Quite overpowered, she hid her face and gave way to her sobs, while old Nanna hastened down scolding and lamenting. The sight of Vincenzo, carried up senseless, called forth a new outburst, as she stood on the stairs, with vehement gestures and tones, preventing any one from passing, and quite unconscious of being in the way. The men who carried him did not know what had caused the accident. Colonel de Crillon could not muster Italian enough to explain, nor could he comprehend the local Italian spoken by Nanna.

'My good woman,' he exclaimed, at last, 'you really must let us pass by. Where is the boy's father or mother?'

'Father or mother, did the Signor say? They have none but me; orphans are they, the blessed children!'

Without further ceremony he pushed by her and ran up-stairs till he reached an open door, where sounds of sobbing directed him to Irene. He was getting thoroughly annoyed, and spoke sharply —

'Signorina, are you aware that we are losing a great deal of time? Be so kind as to speak to your servant, and request her not to stand wailing over your brother as if she were a weeping willow, but to fetch a doctor.'

Irene stood up, looking so scared and wretched that his heart smote him as if he had been cruel to a child.

'Pardon, if I speak like a savage, but indeed it is most im-

portant to waste no more time. Our first thought must be how to relieve him.'

'Yes,' she answered, collecting herself with effort, and still shaken by repressed sobs. 'I am sorry. Papa used to be angry when I cried. What ought I to do?'

'Ah! she has let him pass,' muttered Colonel de Crillon. 'Now we must have him put to bed directly, and then — here, lay him down softly. I'll fetch a doctor myself. The old hag! can't she keep herself quiet?'

'He opens his eyes! — he knows us!' exclaimed Irene, springing towards him, but stopped by Colonel de Crillon. 'I will not talk; I will do just what you tell me. Vincenzo — oh, dear Vincenzo! Nanna, let me see his face. This good gentleman says he will go for a doctor.'

M. de Crillon, however, thought that the boy would never be safely laid in bed without his superintendence, though Irene now showed more self-control and helpfulness than he had imagined she could possess. He gave the men something and got rid of them, and returned to help in undressing Vincenzo, growing meanwhile more exasperated every moment by Nanna's incessant chattering. Vincenzo had revived to entire consciousness, and when M. de Crillon had laid him tenderly in bed, the boy clasped his hand and feebly murmured thanks, and Irene's liquid eyes were even more eloquent. 'It is nothing; let me seek a doctor,' said he, with a smile; and Nanna, looking from the window, saw him the next minute hurrying down the street with what she, from their rapidity, called, inappropriately enough, *passi Inglesi.*

He returned with the French doctor whose name he had the most often heard since he had been in Rome, consequently the one most fashionable and busy. An Italian household of the middle class was new to the foreign physician, and when, after his examination of Vincenzo, Colonel de Crillon privately asked him if he supposed they were badly off, he knew as little of the matter as the inquirer. They looked round, and judged that that there was no poverty here, deceived by the picturesque air of everything; the frilled sheets, the damask couch, the silver cups for holy water hung over the bed, the paintings in carved frames, and the gay painted ceiling. A native would have per-

ceived directly that the rooms bore traces of past competency and present poverty; but the two foreigners understood none of these indications, and did not even think that the bare brick floors looked uncomfortable. M. de Crillon was not rich, but he paid the doctor's fee, told him to let him know if the children wanted anything, and gave him his address at Naples, whither he was obliged to go the next day.

'Is it possible they have no one to look after them but that old witch?' said he, looking to a little outer room, where the wrinkled face of old Nanna, her head covered by nothing but rough and scanty grey hair, was bending over a pot set on a morsel of glowing charcoal, which she was exciting by means of a large *ventolaio*, or feather fan, while she murmured to herself something about having foreseen misfortune since she had dreamed of water the night before.

'No one else? Impossible! Such nice-looking children!'

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

'What do you really think of the boy?'

'I shall be better able to tell to-morrow. My impression is that the spine is injured, and that it is a surgical case.'

M. de Crillon returned to the bedside to bid Vincenzo farewell. The boy was lying with closed eyes and brow knit with pain; the face, so blooming and full of life a few hours before, now wan as if with long illness. He opened his eyes as M. de Crillon took his hand and looked compassionately at him, seemed to recall what had happened, and thanked him, looking round for Irene as if to bid her join him. She came to his side, and looked earnestly at the stranger, almost as if asking for pardon.

'Farewell, my dear boy; Dr. —— will let me know how you go on,' said he, with more cheerfulness than he felt. 'Signorina, I have alarmed you twice to-day; what will your recollections of me be?'

Irene colored with a pretty look of consciousness, held out her hand, and whispered —

'*Addio, signor!*'

The physician made his appearance again next day, and found Vincenzo in less pain, and in a feverish state of excitement about his work at the studio, though unable to sit up. When

assured that absolute rest was imperative, he answered by an impatient gesture, and beckoning Irene to approach, whispered —

'Make Nanna get the truth from him; I must know.'

Accordingly, when the doctor had written his prescription, and was retiring, the old woman followed him, and asked mysteriously what he thought was amiss with Vincenzo. He seemed slightly reluctant to answer, but at last said —

'I may as well tell you the truth; I can do very little for him, and he had better be under a surgeon. I shall not come again unless you send for me. His back is injured.'

'*Santa Vergine!* and when will he be able to work again?'

'I cannot say. If these children are poor, why not let him go to Santo Spirito?'

'The hospital! Better die! The hospital! Let him die of hunger here rather than there! The signor knows nothing of these things. I am *Romana;* I had a relation once in Santo Spirito, and I know what it is. I will starve, I will beg sooner than the boy shall go to the hospital!'

The fashionable physician had little knowledge of Roman charities, and was inclined to believe the popular prejudice against Santo Spirito to be unfounded. He was provoked, and said, drily —

'Do as you please; but I warn you, the boy is very likely to be a cripple for life.'

Thereupon Nanna burst into a perfect howl of grief, mingled with uproarious exclamations and adjurations, which entirely drowned the doctor's emphatic remonstrance. Every word reached Irene and Vincenzo in the inner room, including her last —

'Then may Madonna take us to Paradise, for we shall starve before the week's end!'

'You hear, Irene?' said Vincenzo.

'It is not true,' was her instinctive reply.

He made no answer, but drew the bedclothes over his face, lying thus for a long while, to the extreme terror of Irene, whose own truly southern nature always sought relief in unrestrained and visible emotion. At last he put out his hand, and drew her wet cheek close to his.

'Don't cry so, my own dearest — I can't bear that. Irene, darling, do you remember our father's last words?'

'God hath never failed them that seek Him,' answered Irene in English.

The words came again and again to her mind as she sat by her brother, while Nanna was gone to the druggist's with the prescription. She thought over her past life, for the most part too happy to be easily recalled, but one event stood out prominently — her mother's death. That one long past sorrow was dearer than all the peaceful pleasant days before and after. Then came recollections of her father's teaching; walks with him on *feste*, when he would describe his own childhood in that England of which his children had so little idea — then she recalled his pride in his handsome and talented boy — then a dark vision of the sudden fever that had snatched him away, leaving them little but his memory as a legacy. The brother and sister were then eighteen and sixteen. A few months had passed since they had been left orphans, and all they had to depend on was Vincenzo's earnings, which, for his age, were very considerable. Friends they had none, except his master, the sculptor Trajano, who had treated him with great kindness and liberality. Vincenzo had acquaintances and companions of his own age and position, but no one to whom he could look in time of trouble. They had been but a short time in their present abode; and the children of a Protestant were necessarily singularly isolated in Rome. Their creed must have been a very undefined one, for Nanna and their mother were devout Roman Catholics, but their father had always taken them with him to the English Church, where, unlike too many of the English artists in Rome, he never failed to attend once at least on a Sunday. It was dear to them for his sake, and all old Nanna's horror of the Protestants could not induce them to discontinue the habit of going there. They felt as if they found their father again there more than in the gorgeous worship of the Church of the mother who had been dead so long that their affection for her was vague and dreamy, while the memory of the dear father just lost was fresh as the flowers they strewed on his grave in the lonely burial ground where he was laid. The English Protestant might not lie by

his Roman Catholic wife. Had both lived, the different religions must have caused disunion or confusion: it was well that their children had only peace and love to remember.

The girl's meditations were interrupted.

'Irene! how are we to live?' asked Vincenzo, abruptly. 'You know no more than I do. Well, Nanna must go to tell Signor Trajano not to expect me at present.'

'Yes,' she answered, in a tone of forced cheerfulness, like her brother's.

He lay still again for a while, and she began considering if there were anything she could do to gain money. She did not know much; had she been of a far higher rank she would have known little more. A little arithmetic, reading, writing — let us not forget embroidery and the manufacture of paper flowers — such was the sum of her accomplishments. She had, too, the versatile and ready wit of her countrywomen, and all an Italian's talent for music, but it had never been cultivated; it would bring in no money! Embroidery? Yes, she might sell it; but she knew already several girls who tried to make a few pauls by it, and how sadly few they were. Still, the idea of being able to earn anything at all was cheering, and she awaited Nanna's return with impatience, that she might send her to a workshop. The possibility of going out alone herself never even crossed her mind; independent of the difficulty of leaving Vincenzo by himself, she had never ventured into the street, unaccompanied, in her life; the mere idea would have shocked her. But when Nanna returned, stiff and weary, she could not ask the old woman to go out again. She must wait.

The next day brought Signor Trajano to see Vincenzo, hopeful that his pupil would soon come back; but it was too evident that this was out of the question. He assured him, however, that, come when he might, he should be welcome, and offered for the present to continue his wages. To this Vincenzo could not agree; it was not just; he might never recover.

'At all events, I may pay you for what you have done to the Flora,' said Trajano, laying down several *scudi*, as he went away, to the delight of old Nanna, who bustled out to buy provisions; but Irene saw Vincenzo's hands clasped hard over his face, while

he murmured, 'My Flora! the last statue I shall ever touch!'

Time passed very slowly over the sick boy, whose mind was ever at work, torturing him by visions of a dread future, or planning what his hand could no more execute. His spirits flagged more and more as daily his strength lessened, and he was aware of the straits to which the little household was reduced. He had supported it; he who was now forced to lie helpless, while starvation advanced slowly, relentlessly upon them. When he saw Irene and Nanna whispering together, he knew, with fevered anxiety, that the last paul was gone, and they were consulting how to find another. The attempt to procure embroidery had failed. There remained the great pawnbroking establishment of the *Monte di Pietà*. What could they pledge there?

'The *acquasantiere*,' suggested the old woman, looking towards the cups for holy water, which hung from a wreath of silver lilies above the bed of Vincenzo.

'Or the *conca dell'acqua*,' Irene added, more ready to part with the large brazen vessel used to fetch water in, than with the pretty cups; 'I don't know how we could spare it though, and we should get so little for it. The best thing we have is mamma's *vezzo*.' She opened a drawer, and took from it the row of gold beads and the boat-shaped ear-rings which had been all the fortune of her Neapolitan mother.

'*Figlia mia!* thy dowry!'

'We need not think about that, Nanna!'

'Lucia was a mother before your age, child. Sell the *corona!*' exclaimed the old woman, passing the necklace through her wrinkled brown fingers. 'It was as dew on parched ground to see her when she wore her own dress, her Sora dress; the white *panno* on her head, and these *pendenti* in her ears, and her beads round her neck. You will never be as handsome as she was, child — never, never; you have nothing of your mother, but her voice.'

'And that is of no use, since we cannot sell it,' said Irene.

Brought back to the present by this remark, Nanna recollected that they owed money to the butcher, the baker, and the *pizzicarolo* or greengrocer, and the rent-day was approaching; but as

for parting with the *vezzo*, she would not hear of it. She sought her own coral ornaments, and the silver dagger, known as the *spadino*, worn in the hair, all inherited by her as eldest daughter in her family, and which, as she had never married, and had no child to whom to give them, remained in her own possession. Dire indeed must have been the pressure of necessity which induced her to give up the treasured *vezzo!* She wrapped it in a pocket handkerchief, and departed for the Monte. Vincenzo watched the proceedings in silence, presently desiring Irene to give him his tools, and a half-finished frame, which he had been carving into the elegant festoons and berries of the sarsaparilla, the plant that had been the partial cause of his accident. The attempt to carve showed him how much he was hurt, and the pain it caused him was betrayed by his knit brow and compressed lips; but he defied it for a time, and toiled on, though in his recumbent position he got on very slowly. Irene sat by his bed, knitting; the sounds of singing came faintly up to them from a fountain below, where women were washing clothes, and half unconsciously Irene began, in a low, but exquisitely sweet voice, a verse of a Neapolitan fisherman's song.

'You sing as well as Madame St. Simon,' said Vincenzo, naming the prima donna at one of the theatres.

'Ah! how I should like to hear her again! Now, I will tell you what I should like better than anything, Vincenzino; to be a prima donna myself, and then we should be rich. When we used to see them act at the Valle, I could hardly help standing up and calling to the actors — "No, this is the way!" For I am certain that often even Madame St. Simon only thought of the audience, and forgot that she was Lucia or Amina. If I were only one of the chorus, I would make myself a part, and not stand like a great dry reed.'

'Yes, a reed without even a withered leaf on it, only fit to light a fire!'

'And,' continued Irene, glad to see him smile, 'when I was *prima donna assoluta* I would have a beautiful name. Every prima donna must have a fine name. I would be the Signorina ——'

'No; Mademoiselle ——'

'I am Italian! It is only the foreigners who are mademoiselles.'

'You may depend upon it they would make you into a foreigner. It is so much grander to have singers from abroad.'

'Well,' said Irene, reluctantly. 'I think it a ridiculous thing, however. What should I be? I suppose I might keep our own name?'

'Yes. Mademoiselle Moore — More — Mori.'

'But that is really Italian, Vincenzo.'

'Never mind; it could not sound better. Mademoiselle Mori — that is it.'

Old Nanna had gone as fast as age and rheumatism would let her to the Monte di Pietà, that resource of those who are in immediate need of money. Anything may be pledged there, from a valuable picture to a pair of shoes; part of the value is given to the owner, and a ticket, by means of which it may afterwards be redeemed; but a small rate of interest must be paid for it monthly, and it must be recovered at the end of a certain time, or it will be sold in one of the auctions that take place from time to time.

Nanna mingled with the stream of people that flowed under the great archway leading into the quadrangle, on each side of which are the vast magazines where all the goods are arranged — a stream consisting of old and young, men, maidens, and matrons, chiefly of a low rank, and all brought thither reluctantly by the same need of money. Nearly all the faces, of whatever age or sex, were worn and anxious, except some few who came not on their own account, but commissioned by others too busy or of too high a rank to choose to appear in person. There was a list of articles to be sold in a few days hung up beside the doorway, and amongst them were some far too valuable to have been pledged by the poor — a ruby necklace, a silver cup, a lace veil. Doubtless there was a history attached to each, a sad one enough, usually. Fresh faces continually passed in and out, showing how greatly this institution was taken advantage of by the needy; for far from this being the only place in Rome where they could go, the Monte had *succursali*, branches, in each *rione* or district of Rome. A small number of those who entered,

parted from the crowd and took a different direction, with looks so elated, and steps so quick, that it was easy to see that they were of the happy few whom some good fortune enabled to recover their possessions. Presently a burst of passionate grief was heard, and a woman came back, sobbing aloud. A murmur of compassion went through the crowd — '*Poverina!* her things have been sold! Ah, shame! ah, the Pagans!' — all sympathizing in a calamity which might befall any one of themselves, if they failed to pay the interest on what they had borrowed. 'What did they give you? how much have you got back?'

'A nothing! a folly! a scandal!' she answered, tossing out her hand, in which were a few pauls — part of what her household gods had fetched.

'Ah,' responded the others, with indescribable, though suppressed scorn and anger; 'see the beautiful charity!'

She went out, passing by a party of English, who were asking the Swiss porter if they might visit the establishment, without perhaps very well knowing what they were to see. The Italians immediately detected the foreign dress and accent, and not very complimentary remarks passed between them, as they came and went, on the English heretics who had come to spy out their poverty. Unheeding or unhearing remarks made in the local dialect, almost incomprehensible to any but a native, and differing even in different parts of Rome, the foreigners disappeared into the room, where the porter told them that the pictures were kept, probably imagining that they should see a Borghese or Spada gallery instead of such originals and copies as had been pawned.

Time is apparently an article valued by none but foreigners in Rome, and so much was consumed before it came to Nanna's turn to be attended to, that she found the shortening November day had nearly closed when she left the Monte. A sirocco was blowing, the streets were wet as if with rain, and nearly empty, and of the few passengers, some had umbrellas up, others held them furled, as if there were a diversity of opinion as to whether it rained or not, but every Italian had his cloak flung across his mouth, and hurried on his way, anxious to escape from the chill-

ing atmosphere. The air was heavy; darkness had come on before its time; there was a gloomy, disconsolate look everywhere. Old Nanna muttered in disgust as the damp, cold wind made her shiver, and quickened her pace, but coming to the Church of Sant' Agostino, she stopped, pushed aside the heavy mat which hung at the doorway, and entered, signing herself rapidly with holy water, and devoutly kneeling down among the congregation — a remarkably numerous one, considering that the hour was late, and there was no service going on. The scene was one peculiarly Roman. Darkness prevailed in the building, though before each altar in the side aisles burned a small lamp suspended from the roof, and two more shone out with a clear, steady brilliancy, like that of stars, at the further end; but all around was gloom, and the bottom of the church seemed a cavern into which the eye was unable to pierce or follow the figures that now and then passed into it. But at the lower end was a marble statue of the Virgin holding the Infant Saviour, and above, and around it, were a wreath of lamps whose light illumined it and flashed on the silver hearts, crucifixes, and other countless offerings which incrusted the pillars and the walls — tokens of gratitude from those who believed that their prayers at this shrine had been granted. From some curious effect of light, the form of the Infant Christ could hardly be distinguished, and the illumination brought out the figure of the Virgin alone, and into strong, startling relief. Two tapers, in massive bronze candlesticks, rose at least fourteen feet from the ground, at some distance from the altar. A large congregation of men and women knelt around in profound silence; sometimes a new worshipper came in, or another softly rose, went up to the statue, and kissed or held a child to kiss its feet, before leaving the church. Nanna was one of the last to go; had her prayer been audible, it would have been found to end thus: — 'Listen to me, *Madonna mia;* you will not let us starve, for you are our Mother, full of grace, and goodness, and mercy. What mother will let her children starve? Queen of Heaven and Earth, listen to me. Queen of Angels, now you know everything — I have told you all. I am going away, and you must really and truly make the boy well. *Addio*, dear Madonna.'

Putting her rosary into her pocket, she went up the low steps leading to the altar, kissed earnestly the Virgin's feet, and dipping a bit of cotton wool into the oil of a small lamp burning close at hand, left the church, happy in the belief that Vincenzo would soon be well, since she had vowed to offer her ear-rings to the Virgin of Sant' Agostino should he again go to his work, and had moreover obtained a charm, which must avail, if used with faith. Nanna was not the only one who carried home that evening a similar bit of cotton or tow dipped in the holy oil, nor would persons of a much higher rank and education have doubted, for a moment, that its application to an ailing part would have miraculous results. Probably this custom dates from the middle ages, when on certain days the clergy and people went in procession to particular churches, and mass having been sung, an acolyte dipped a piece of tow in the oil of the lamp which burnt before the shrine of the saint whose day they had been celebrating, and bore it to the Pope, saying, 'To-day the station took place in such a church, and the saint salutes you.' A solemn message! The locks of tow were carefully kept to form a pillow, on which the Pontiff's head might rest in his grave.

No such antiquarian speculations troubled old Nanna as she went homewards, her heart much the lighter for the pauls in her pocket, and the entire and childlike confidence that her prayer must be granted, and Vincenzo's recovery be secured. As her knock came to the door which shut in their rooms, Irene was lighting a small lamp, and with true Roman caution she exclaimed, 'Who is it?' and came to reconnoitre before she would open. The time had seemed long to her during the old woman's absence: Vincenzo had fallen asleep, and, afraid to rouse him, she had been sitting in the dark with the spaniel's cold nose in her hand. He showed his astonishment at his young master's inactivity as plainly as a human being could have done; and when he stood by the bed, wagging his tail or giving a short bark, while he fixed his intelligent eyes on the boy, tears filled Irene's eyes, and Vincenzo had some difficulty in concealing his own.

'Oh, Nanna! how long you have been! Down, Tevere, be quiet!'

'Eh! eh! daughter, go yourself next time. Keep tranquil, evil dog! you would see what is in my apron, eh? Little enough I got for all I took, but we can live for a while, and then Madonna help us! How is my boy? see what I have brought home, sun of my soul! Here is a fine supper for us all,' said the old woman, as gay as a child, now that want was staved off for a time, and producing her handkerchief, full of yellow-brown shells, *telline*, as she, unlearned in conchology, would have called them, but more properly *donaces*, a favorite dish, cooked or uncooked, in Rome. '*Scansarti!* begone, dog! And here is something besides, something to make my darling boy well; and I have promised Madonna that he will never go to the English Church again, now that he has felt her displeasure attends it.'

Irene looked grave, and wondered that Vincenzo made no protest, unless a hasty movement might be so called. A moment afterwards it came upon her, with a sort of stab of pain, that he had not spirits to combat Nanna's prejudices, or to laugh at them as usual, because he believed that never again should he have the power of walking to the English Church.

CHAPTER II.

I have been told the virtuous must be happy,
And have believed it true: tell me, my friend,
What shall disturb the virtuous?
Poverty! SOUTHEY.

ONE thing after another was sold; even Irene's *vezzo* and the guitar on which she used to play with untaught skill, down to their little lamp, and many other things which it was hard to spare, and which fetched so little at the Monte that Nanna did not scruple to say it was 'an infamy, an iniquity;' and in truth the institution is not at the present day exactly what was contemplated by the founder, St. Bernardino of Siena. Nanna urged the advisability of taking the *vezzo* to some one who might be induced to advance a more equitable sum on it, with the promise that it should speedily be redeemed; and she was disconcerted by Irene's objecting that this was dishonorable, since they had no chance of recovering it. Such a pitch of morality was beyond the old woman, who, though thoroughly faithful to the orphans, had little notion of truth and honesty towards others, and was only a degree above those of her compatriots who pick their neighbor's pockets while reciting their prayers devoutly in a church.

One thing went, then another; the picture of Santa Lucia, their mother's patron saint; sketches by their father, in the beautiful carved frames which Vincenzo had delighted to make for them; at last even the portrait of their mother, their dearest possession; and as they could not pay the trifling interest due to the Monte for the money lent on these things, they knew that all would speedily be sold in the auction room in the Piazza dei Pellegrini, where so many household treasures are examined

by careless hands, and sold for prices far below their real value.

Each day something went, till at last there was nothing more to sell. Nothing! and Vincenzo grew no better. He could now sit up a little and use his hands, but that was all, and hunger was close at hand, and an execution for rent impending. Hunger — actual hunger — not a morsel of bread in the cupboard; not one handful more maize to make another dish of polenta. Daily, Irene had grown whiter and thinner as food became scarcer, and what were her brother's feelings, as from his sick bed he saw it, and knew that nothing stood between them and starvation. At any time, a boy must have felt as a trial almost unbearable this sudden change from buoyant health and constant occupation, which made a leisure hour or an occasional festa so delightful, to ceaseless pain and forced idleness. Vincenzo had no books, and, moreover, had not been brought up to care for reading; the future had been his constant dream, and he had no store of recollections to fall back upon; all day long he lay in his bed with nothing to think of but their desperate condition. The boy had a gallant spirit, and from the day that Irene had been trusted to his care by their dying father, to his elastic youth he had added a man's earnestness. How happy and proud he had been in the knowledge that he supported the whole household! And now it was all over. At least he would not complain, and as long as any one saw him, he maintained some cheerfulness, and if Irene had not one night fancied that she heard a sound in his room and crept to the door to listen, without waking Nanna, she would never have known how dire was the struggle to keep up that composure by day. She stood for a little while unperceived, watching his face, so white in the moonlight; she heard broken, despairing, imploring prayers, till her heart was ready to break; and if she had followed her impulse she would have rushed to his bedside and sobbed away her wretchedness there; but Irene was no longer the mere child she had been but a few weeks before; she, too, had been taking lessons in self-control. Many times already she had forced out a cheerful answer, and tried to forget that she was hungry, and now she knew that this anguish was meant for no mortal eye,

and would not betray that she had seen it. In the morning she asked Vincenzo rather timidly how he was. He answered, 'I'll tell you how many noises I counted last night: — First, at midnight, some one was wanted on the sixth story of the house over the way, so there were six knocks. They must sleep soundly up there, for they did not wake till the third summons, that made eighteen thumps. Then came a party very jolly indeed, with a mandolin, all singing; some one opened a window to listen, so, of course, they began to bark. I never can understand why they do that.'

'Modesty! I suppose they mean to say that they are not worth listening to — mere dogs. However, they howled rather nicely, so I was sorry when they turned the corner. Then the bells of Sta. Maria Santissima rang for the midnight *funzione;* then S. Nicolo struck up just as I was going to sleep; and then came day-light; and the soldiers and their drums; before that, I ought to have counted the firing from S. Angelo for the *festa*, and the man who cries chicory; and so I did not get much sleep to be sure.'

Not a word of any other reason, and Irene asked no more.

It being a *festa*, Nanna, of course, went to mass, and returned so radiant with delight that Irene eagerly asked what had happened. Nanna mysteriously produced something which she had held in her hand, under her apron, and Irene beheld a bracelet, formed of bosses of garnets, which, from its workmanship, she had no difficulty as recognising as Florentine. In answer to her eager questions, Nanna said that she had picked it up in a church — without, however, mentioning that she had seen it fall from the arm of an English lady. She was going to take it to the Ghetto, and see what the Jews would give for it.

'But,' said Irene, doubtfully, 'it — it is not ours; it will be advertised.'

'Let them advertise, if they like, and let us live, silly child!'

'What is it?' asked Vincenzo.

Irene explained, though Nanna made a sign to her not to do so.

'Of course it is not ours; go to the libraries in the Piazza di Spagna and say you have found a bracelet; don't keep it here

to tempt us,' said Vincenzo, more sharply than they had ever known him speak before. Nanna grumblingly obeyed, comforted a little by the hope of a reward, and on reaching the library, she found the ladies whom she had seen in the church, talking to the bookseller about their loss. He advised an advertisement, but gave them small hopes of recovering it. One of the party said she believed she had heard it drop; she looked, but there was nothing to be seen, and, if she were right, an old woman, who was kneeling near, must —— Just at this point Nanna appeared; the sight of her caused a sensation, but the bracelet was speedily restored to its owner, who was too well satisfied to ask any questions, and Nanna had no cause to be dissatisfied with English liberality.

Signor Trajano came again and left money, which made Irene and Nanna so happy for several days that they wondered at Vincenzo's increased depression, for they did not see that he felt how they were living on alms; and, besides, anything that reminded him of the studio was acutely painful. But, in a short time, these chance supplies were exhausted, and they literally did not know whither to turn for a meal. They rose up hungry in the morning, and went to bed at night almost without having broken their fast, to wake to the same state of things. All their neighbors were very poor; of the seven or eight families living in the same house with them, most lived from hand to mouth, sleeping on straw, and crowded into one or two rooms. None had the power, if they had the will, to help them.

Neither of the three complained nor spoke of what was to be done. Old Nanna had tried every resource, even to begging, and all in vain. They and starvation kept house together. One afternoon Irene went down to the fountain to fetch some water and cry unseen; returning with her noiseless step, she saw old Nanna crouched in a corner, her distaff, with no flax on it, lying on the ground beside her; Vincenzo lying idle, the clay that he had begged Signor Trajano to send him, left untouched beside him; it was a picture of blank hopelessness. Just then the spaniel, which had followed Irene down, pattered back into the room, looked into his empty food-dish, went up to his master's bedside, and wagged his tail. Nothing could have spoken plainer.

'Poor fellow!' said Vincenzo, in English, that Nanna might not understand, 'are you hungry? So am I.'

The dog whined, and put his fore paws on the bed, trying to lick his face. Nanna never looked up, she was sunk into apathetic despair; but Irene heard only too plainly, and in a passion of anguish she drew her shawl over her head, and ran down-stairs out into the street, all her fears and prejudices forgotten in the kind of despairing hope that she might find some help. Nanna had failed at the workshop, but perhaps they might have pity on a girl who said she was starving. She hurried on, hardly feeling or seeing the passengers whom she ran against or who pushed her off the crowded side paths, till she came to the workshop, where there were more customers than the owners could easily attend to. No one had a minute to spare for her — her entreaties were hardly listened to; repulsed, she found herself outside the shop again, her last hope gone. She leaned against the wall, too faint and heart sick to move a step further, and, half unconsciously, watched the passers by, who brushed impatiently against the object in their way, without stopping to regard it. An old crone with the never-failing *scaldino* (or basket of charcoal to keep the hands warm) stood near; Irene heard her mutter, 'Fifteen pauls; only fifteen pauls to-day!' then, in a prolonged whine, 'Give me some little alms, that the Madonna may give you health! Do not abandon me, signor — madama! I am so hungry! Oh! hard hearts!' with a snarl, as they passed on, unheeding. A gentleman gave her some small coin, and Irene involuntarily held out her hand too. He hurried on, saying to his companion, 'These beggars are the pest of the place; all the same! I wonder how many scudi I should have spent if I had given a bajocco to every one who has begged since I came out!'

The lady on his arm laughed, and they disappeared in the never-ending stream of promenaders, chiefly gay sight-seers, rejoicing in the sunshine. No one had a glance for the desolate girl, who stood just where she had leant when first sent out of the shop. A child was the only one to have compassion — a little fellow of perhaps four years old, who came running out of the confectioner's shop next door, preceding his mother, a bun

in his fat hand. He was a perfect picture of a rosy, well-dressed English child, in his black velvet pelisse, and a little pink handkerchief round his throat. He was chattering with all his might, till he looked up and met the wistful black eyes of Irene. She did not beg this time; she only looked at the bun as if famished, and the little one suddenly put it into her hand and scrambled into a carriage after his mother. Irene saw his rosy laughing face pressed against the glass to watch her as they drove away. She had clutched the bun fast — what a mouthful it was to a girl who had eaten nothing that day! but she had scarcely devoured it, when the thought of Nanna and Vincenzo at home flashed upon her. She had forgotten them! Poor child, her hungry impulse seemed actual sin; she had eaten the bun while her sick brother was starving at home! Miserable as she felt, she had recovered a little energy — she turned homewards, but had to go back with no comfort for those she should find there! And yet she had trusted — she had believed long, for time in some circumstances cannot be counted by days and hours; she had believed so firmly that help would be sent them! had that promise indeed failed? and if so, where was she to turn for help? Three o'clock was past and the churches were again open: she entered the first she came to, and hiding her face in her hands, wept so passionately that she did not perceive that one of a party of English, who were examining the pictures and statues, had approached her, and laying a hand on her shoulder, asked gently what had happened. Startled by the touch, Irene hastily lifted a face so white and so thin that the lady started, looked doubtful, and said, 'Have I not seen you in the English Church?'

'I go there.'

'Then what right have you here, my child?'

'It is God's house; I have the right of every one who is unhappy,' Irene answered.

'And why are you unhappy? Have you been ill?'

In reply Irene told her story, ending with, 'Oh, signora, it was so wicked of me to eat that bun! I forgot Vincenzo! I did indeed!'

'Will you take me to see Vincenzo?'

A sudden flash of delight from Irene's black eyes was the answer, and her companion returned to her party and spoke a few words, which were received with smiling incredulity. No one objected, however, and she accompanied Irene, stopping at the first breadshop they came to that Irene might have something more substantial than a bun, and convey a supply to her home. In all the ecstasy of renewed hope, she hurried her new friend along, through streets quite unknown to the latter, till they reached their destination, a square, which, to judge by the number of old palaces, must once have been a favorite quarter of the nobility, but now each floor was divided into many apartments and let to the poor; rags hung to dry from many windows, and hides, scenting the whole air, were suspended before one stately mansion; there was a general look of poverty and dirt everywhere. Into one of these palaces, Irene introduced her companion, running lightly before her up flight after flight of stairs. Nanna came slowly to the door in answer to her impatient knock; she had not even perceived her absence, Nanna who usually watched over her like a dragon!

'Oh, Nanna!' began Irene, breathlessly, 'this lady has come to see us, and she has brought us all this! She carried it all down the Corso, and did not mind! and I must give Vincenzo some dinner immediately — see!'

'*Per Bacco!*' exclaimed Nanna, taking possession of the visitor's hand and kissing it, as she conducted her into the next room, where Irene was explaining eagerly to Vincenzo. The lady advanced and took the hand, thin and fair as an invalid girl's, which he held out to her, examining her face attentively, then smiling and saying, 'Mrs. Dalzell.'

'How do you know my name?' she asked, much surprised.

'I worked in Signor Trajano's studio, and he had just begun to model your bust before my accident.'

'I knew I had seen you somewhere before. I noticed you in the English Church,' she answered; 'I have long wished to meet with you; fortune favored me to-day.'

While Irene insisted on Vincenzo's eating immediately, Mrs. Dalzell looked round and asked questions, and felt very sure that here at least she was safe from the imposition which her friends

had predicted. If M. de Crillon had seen the room now, he would have had no doubt as to the poverty of its owners, and when Mrs. Dalzell looked at the faces of the brother and sister, she felt that she had come but just in time. Old Nanna saw her compassionate look and exclaimed, 'If the signora had but seen the boy before he fell ill! he was an Adonis, an Apollo! ah!' (shaking her hand at him) 'and a demon too, a tempest, wicked boy! He would rush up-stairs shaking the whole house! *Santa Vergine!*' as she caught a clearer view of Mrs. Dalzell than she had yet done, and she summoned Irene aside. The girl speedily returned, saying with animation, 'Nanna says you were with the lady whose bracelet she found!'

Mrs. Dalzell's sensation was far from pleasant, as she recalled her conviction that the bracelet had rather been stolen than found, but she was convinced that the orphans were unconnected with the affair. However, she was glad when Irene added, 'We were so poor that day that Nanna wanted to sell it, but Vincenzo would not let her.'

'I am glad of it; I know that my friend values it particularly. Have you really no one to take care of you but this old woman? What hands for a girl to be in!' she added, mentally.

'No, no one else. Tevere, do you really want some more! Oh fie! No one else, signora, but she is so kind and true to us. She is a pearl, an oriental pearl of probity,' said Irene, whose English, though fluent, was apt to be a translation from the more poetical Italian. The figure of speech, especially so applied, made Mrs. Dalzell smile, and she thought that the truth and probity probably began and ended at home.

'I never knew the value of my dinner so well before, signora,' said Vincenzo, sinking comfortably back on the pillows, which Irene had re-arranged for him.

'We had almost forgotten what dinner was,' she added.

'Is it possible you could find no assistance?' asked Mrs. Dalzell; 'I thought the Roman charities were magnificent.'

'They are not for such as we; they are to keep quiet the *bassa gente* — the populace,' replied Irene, with grave simplicity.

'And not for Protestants,' added Vincenzo.

'Ah, no. And you have no friends, though you have lived here so long?'

'None who can help us. My father had few; he lived for his art.'

'I should like to be considered as your friend then,' said Mrs. Dalzell, rising to take leave. 'Signor Trajano and I must have a little talk together. Give me your doctor's address again, and don't forget mine. I shall come to pay you another visit in a day or two.' She took Vincenzo's hand in hers, as she spoke and looked kindly at his face, so much altered from what she remembered it, that it was hard to believe he was the fine handsome boy she had admired on the Pincian Hill.

'I would thank you if I could, signora,' he answered, in hurried, faltering tones. 'Oh, signora, we were starving — *she* was starving' — looking at Irene; 'that was worst; I was beginning to wish I were dead, sooner than see it.'

'Oh, Vincenzo!' said Irene, with a crimson blush.

'I shall leave you to make your confessions to him,' said Mrs. Dalzell: 'but, meanwhile, will you come here and say something for me to Nanna?'

She gave Nanna what she judged would be sufficient for their present wants, and departed before the old woman had half expressed her voluble gratitude.

CHAPTER III.

What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own, she learnt to melt at others' woe.
GRAY.

MRS. DALZELL was a widow, still young, and rich. She had come to Rome for the first time in her life, and friends, who had known her in former days, expected her to be enthusiastically delighted with its wonders; but, hitherto, she had gone through the routine of sight-seeing with a somewhat forced interest, and the first thing that really roused her was the history of the orphans. Her friends were too glad to see her begin to shake off the depression, caused by heavy trials, to wish to interfere, though they took it for granted that she would be imposed on. She set about her task in a very business-like manner; she saw the physician who had first attended Vincenzo, and sent a good surgeon to see him; and she had a great deal of conversation with Signor Trajano about him; but she found it so difficult to devise any schemes for the permanent benefit of the orphans, that she returned to their house to see whether they had any ideas on the subject themselves. Cheerfulness and comfort had revisited the rooms, and Irene and Vincenzo met her greeting with bright looks. She had calculated her gift on an English scale, ignorant of how far Italians can make a little money go, and she assuredly had not expected that almost the first use of her bounty would be the recovery of Irene's gold ear-rings. Irene exhibited them to her with delight, relating how they had been first pledged, and then sold; but how Nanna had discovered who had bought them and got them back. Unaware of the extreme value attached to the *vezzo*, Mrs. Dalzell was inclined to regard this as mere foreign love of finery, and determined, for the future, not to trust Nanna with more money than necessary.

She sat down by Vincenzo, who was cheered by having been allowed to leave his bed and be carried to a sofa. He was carving a bunch of cyclamen leaves and flowers with a delicacy and grace that surprised her, and Irene told of the beautiful frames that he had made for their father's pictures — all sold now. She stopped, seeing the flush that rose to her brother's face at the recollection of those lost treasures, so inestimable to the orphans. Mrs. Dalzell described to him a room which she had once seen decorated by a celebrated carver with groups of birds, musical instruments, and flowers, in exactly the same style as Vincenzo's, and asked him if he did not think he might gain a livelihood in this way.

'Oh, signora! To get my own living again! not to live on charity — to be even thus much of an artist! You little know what happiness you have given me!'

'I think I know several people who would employ you,' she replied, amused at the un-English vehemence of his gratitude; the invalid's face seemed suddenly to have recovered its bloom; the dark eyes sparkled; Vincenzo looked for a time transformed into his old self. 'Finish what you are about and then let me have it. And what can Irene do?'

'Irene wishes to be a prima donna,' answered Vincenzo, smiling.

'A prima donna!'

'I could act, I think,' said Irene herself; and Mrs. Dalzell, watching her expressive and graceful movements and looks, felt that she was right.

'And she can sing,' added Vincenzo.

'Ah! she must let me hear her.'

'Sing something, *carina*,' said Vincenzo; 'what a pity your *chitarra* is gone!'

'What is that? I thought the mandolin was the Roman instrument.'

'That is a man's instrument. Oh, signora, at Easter you should go to the Villa Borghese, on the river side, to see the people dancing the salterello and playing with castanets and the mandolin — it is beautiful!'

'But now I want to hear you.'

With a glance towards Vincenzo, Irene began a popular canzone, acting the expression just enough to show how much dramatic power she possessed, and soon, so entirely forgetting all but her song, that her tones, at first faltering, became steady and full, and proved how fine the voice would some day be. Vincenzo watched the face of Mrs. Dalzell anxiously, and thought he read surprise and admiration. He was much disappointed when, as the song ceased, she quietly remarked, 'You have a very nice voice, but I should be sorry you should turn it to account on the stage. You can have no idea of the temptations and trials of such a life, or of its hard work either.'

Irene made no answer. Mrs. Dalzell sat thinking, and Vincenzo said, 'She very nearly went to Madame St. Simon the other day to beg her to teach her, only her courage failed.'

'It will not do so again, Vincenzo.'

'You wish it so much?' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'what do you know about it?'

Irene looked at her brother, who replied for her, 'I do not know whether she be quite in earnest, and I believe it is not acting that she cares so much for; she would like to be a prima donna at the opera.'

'But I am in earnest, Vincenzo,' said Irene, emphatically.

It was not the life that Mrs. Dalzell would have chosen for her *protégée*. She avoided a definite answer, and left them, glad that Vincenzo's plans were more sober, and recommending him to finish his carving as soon as he could. He, delighted to be employed again, and employed, too, on a kind of sculpture where his imagination had play, was happier than he had been since his accident, and seemed insensible to the fatigue which even this slight labor caused him. Irene, on the contrary, was moody, and said, after a long silence, 'I believe I could be a great cantatrice; I do not see what right this English lady has to interfere.'

'Interfere!' said Vincenzo, looking up in surprise.

'Yes, interfere. I shall ask Madame St. Simon to help me, not this Signora Dalzell; and if I succeed I can repay her; many learn on that condition.'

'Child! child!' broke in Nanna, 'are you crazy? what are you saying? This rich English lady can make us live in Asiatic

luxury; her purse drops gold, and you had not the sense to tell her to-day that we have not got the *corona* back; did you not hear what I said to you?'

'She has done too much already,' said Vincenzo; 'help of this kind I can take,' pointing to his carving; 'but we are not beggars.'

'No, and because I do not wish to live on her money or on any one else's, I want to learn singing,' said Irene, with cheeks so flushed and eyes so tearful, that Vincenzo found the matter was more serious than he had imagined, and asked gravely how long she had had this fancy.

'You might remember that I always wished it, Vincenzo, long before — before our troubles, but I never thought it was possible till that day when you said I sang as well as Madame St. Simon.'

'It was an unlucky day when I said it. Think how actresses are regarded.'

'If I were prima donna, my profession should be esteemed for my sake; I would make it the most honorable in Rome. Vincenzo, cannot you understand that as you — as men I mean — wish for fame, so women may! I think, if one has the power to do anything, one must and one ought to do it,' said Irene, who seemed in the last few weeks to have grown from a child into a woman; the ambition that had lain dormant in her heart was awake, and no spell known to prudent brother or friend could lull it to sleep again. The bird had found out the use of its wings; its nest would soon seem only a prison. Vincenzo had had visions of his own, he comprehended.

'I understand, Irene,' he said, unconsciously speaking very mournfully; 'I know that when one has a vocation and cannot follow it, one must feel like a swallow which cannot migrate; but how is it that you care so suddenly and so much about this?'

'Because till lately I had — I had — I cannot tell you.'

'Perhaps till lately you thought so much of fame for me that you did not want it for yourself!'

Irene turned away hastily; she could not bear to realize what nevertheless she knew full well, that Vincenzo's chance of fame was gone forever. She came back caressingly to his side, almost as if asking pardon. 'I could not help thinking about it; I was

so glad of any pleasant fancies, and I thought so often to myself what Madame St. Simon would say, and what I would sing to prove to her that I had a voice, that at last I almost believed it had all come to pass; but the last few days, when we were so hungry, I had not courage; I did not seem to care for anything.'

'Poor little one,' said Vincenzo, affectionately. And she, taking courage, nestled close to him, whispering,

'But don't say you will never be well again; you are better already, and if, as the doctor says, you could go into the country and have baths —'

'Don't talk about it, Irene,' said Vincenzo, unaware that he was speaking sharply; 'I would rather think about you and your singing.'

'I care more for you than even for that,' she answered.

Vincenzo had a Roman's love of music and a Roman's delight in the theatre, and the idea of letting Irene follow her wishes grew less unwelcome as he considered them. After all, he was but a boy, and the dream of renown for her, if not for himself, was very pleasant. He pictured to himself her success, and mentally compared her voice with those of the few public singers of note whom he had heard, and it did not suffer by comparison. She had almost won him over to her side before night, and Nanna was vehemently in her favor. Vincenzo had heard enough of theatres to make him hesitate a little, but even this anxiety was a relief to his mind, wearied with dwelling on one subject. His dreams were an odd mixture of cyclamens, musical instruments, hisses and applause, and even the famous Book of Visions could hardly have explained one wherein he beheld Irene playing on the tool which Italian sculptors call a violin, in the Teatro Regio. Mrs. Dalzell was much worried by the turn affairs had taken. She had intended to help the orphans in some sober unobtrusive way, and had little expected to find a musical genius upon her hands. She knew too well how much entertained most of her English friends would be, to feel inclined to confide her perplexities to them; in their stead, she sought an old acquaintance whom she had known slightly years before in London, and had found again living in Rome, a Madame Marriotti, by birth a Spaniard, once the idol of the musical world, and

who still in advanced age preserved her love of music, with the execution and taste, and even something of the voice, that had made her pre-eminent among the professional musicians of her day.

Mrs. Dalzell wanted to find her alone and disengaged, and therefore sent a note, announcing that she was coming to spend the evening with her whenever she had no reception. She walked alone to Madame Marriotti's abode, her own being close by, and her habits very independent. She had yet to learn Italian ways, and was greatly surprised, on reaching the archway leading into the house, to find herself in total darkness, and hear a trampling as if oxen or horses were close by. Remembering that the staircase faced a stable, she hastily retreated into the street, where at least there was such light as could be obtained from one dim oil-lamp at the far end of it, and another burning under a picture of the Virgin, fastened on the wall. When all was quiet, she ventured in again, and, with some trepidation, felt her way up two steep flights of stairs, happily, at last, chancing to lay her hand on a string, which caused a bell somewhere to ring. A voice, up aloft, exclaimed, '*Chi è?*' and the heavy door at the head of the stairs was opened a little way. Mrs. Dalzell profited by the ray of light that shone through the crack, and soon made her way to Madame Marriotti's rooms. A quick, clear voice from within, answered, '*Passi!*' to her knock, and entering, she found Madame Marriotti rummaging papers in a cabinet, with a fur cloak wrapped round her, and a little red *fazzoletto* on her head. She turned round to look at her visitor, exhibiting a small dark face, with vivid black eyes and jet-black crisped hair, scarcely streaked with grey; a face which she herself always considered ugly, but which was capable of such varying and brilliant expression, that it was worth all imaginable beauty of coloring. Her figure was of fairy proportions, and still as light and active as a girl's, though little could be seen of it in her manifold wraps, and neither it nor her countenance owed anything to her costume, which, to say the least, was singular; and altogether a more original little creature than the celebrated cantatrice would have been hard to find. She ceased hunting through her papers for a moment, to shake hands with Mrs. Dal-

zell, and stir the wood fire, where an earthen pot was boiling, set on an iron tripod, contrasting oddly with the size and handsome furniture of the apartment.

'Ah, so you have come,' said she, absently, as if she had not well mastered the idea that Mrs. Dalzell was present. 'I was thinking of you this — ah, by the bye, you sent me a note. I cannot think where this letter is,' she said, returning to the cabinet, and soliloquizing in short sentences while she rustled the papers.

Mrs. Dalzell waited with exemplary patience till the missing one was found, and Madame Marriotti came voluntarily to sit beside her and talk. Then she began telling her business, growing more eager as she proceeded, and looking at Madame Marriotti as she ended, to see what effect she had produced.

'Ah — yes —' was the reply, in a preoccupied manner; 'it is a curious story. I dare say you are right.'

'My dear madame, have you heard a word of what I said?'

'Oh yes, I heard it,' was the answer, in exactly the same dreamy tone; then all at once wakening up to present things, she asked very sharply, 'What did you say?'

In short, her mind had been absent, and Mrs. Dalzell's story had reached her ear, but not her brain, and had to be told all over again. She listened this time with increasing surprise and disdain.

'A *cantatrice!* you are dreaming! I dare say the girl has a pretty voice; every Roman can sing; they are all musical; if you passed any café to-night where there was music, you might have seen a crowd outside the door listening, and every one of that crowd could have joined in the airs played; that is a very different thing from having a talent for the stage. Make a *Maestra Pia* of the girl, if you don't know what to do with her; but don't turn her head with talking of the theatre.'

'I am sure I am most guiltless of wishing her to be an actress,' said Mrs. Dalzell, half laughing; 'and I have not an idea what a *Maestra Pia* is.'

'Don't you know? The *Maestre Pie* have three great houses of education here for the middle class, and besides some of them hold free schools in every parish in the Papal States; they don't

go very deep, you know, so nobody is afraid of them ; but we don't love education overmuch here. They take no perpetual vows, but there is some ceremony when they are admitted.'

Mrs. Dalzell laughed outright this time. 'I don't think that would do at all, and besides, Irene cannot leave her brother. I assure you her voice is not a common one, and if you had seen her graceful gestures as she told me her story —'

'All that may be very true, especially if she has Neapolitan blood in her — have you been at Naples? No? — well, they converse there more by looks and gestures than by words — it is not proved that she has the slightest talent for the stage.'

'Her wish is so strong, however, that she was near applying to Madame St. Simon.'

'That settles it at once. That woman! I do assure you, my dear —' Madame Marriotti started up in her energy — 'I do assure you it makes me perfectly ill to hear her. A vain, heartless coquette, without a grain of sentiment — nothing but a flexible voice with which she can do wonderful things, I dare say ; I hear every one say so except the Abate Grossi, the only man who knows what music is — real old music ; he keeps up the traditions of the old ways, and hates this new school of macaws, just as I do. No. If this girl admires Madame St. Simon, that is enough.'

'I wish you would hear her, at all events.'

'Where do they live?'

'It is near. You know the church of St. Andrea della Valle — the famous church which every one goes to see.'

'No.'

'Not, my dear madame? impossible!'

'No,' repeated the old lady, very incredulous of its existence.

'Well,' said Mrs. Dalzell, resignedly, knowing that Madame Marriotti might have seen it fifty times without being conscious of its existence, unless something particular brought the fact home to her mind, 'it does not matter much ; I could not ask you to go there, but should you object to my bringing her here, without, of course, pledging you in any way? I really should be thankful to put this fancy out of her head, and from your decision there could be no appeal.'

'You may bring her here if you like, but I cannot promise to admire her singing, out of politeness. I know exactly the kind of thing it will be.'

'Very well, only be so kind as to hear her sing once; then we can settle about it,' said Mrs. Dalzell; and Madame Marriotti began to talk of some matter uppermost in her mind, and entirely forgot the first part of the conversation.

Mrs. Dalzell found that friends had arranged plans for her and themselves, which occupied the whole of the next day; and pictures, churches, ruins and views, left no room in her mind for her *protégés*. Returning to her lodgings at night, weary, excited, and feeling that she had seen an immense variety of things, which she could not clearly recall, a more living interest was brought back by the sight of Vincenzo's carving, which had arrived in her absence. Minute inspection only made her better pleased with it, and she placed it in her drawing-room, intending to become its purchaser; but a friend called the next day, and at once declared it must be his — it would exactly suit a painting which he had bought — where had she met with it? She told its history, and gave Vincenzo's address, with strong hopes that other orders would follow, and she could not resist taking him the good news at once. Irene met her with such cheerful looks that she smiled, and asked if she had forgiven her for opposing her wishes. Irene blushed and looked at Vincenzo, who answered, smiling, 'She expects that you have brought her good news.'

'How could she guess anything about it?'

'Oh, you have, signora!' cried Irene, with great animation; 'I knew you would, for I had a good dream last night!'

'It may be only my frame; I think that is enough good luck for to-day!' said Vincenzo.

'A dream, my dear child? What did you dream about?' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'I dreamed of *farina*,' replied Irene, seriously; but, perceiving that her visitor did not comprehend, she added, 'You know, that always means good fortune. I did not know what it would be; but as soon as I saw you from the window, I was sure that you were bringing me good news about my singing.'

'*Farina?*' repeated Mrs. Dalzell.

'What bread is made of, signora. Do you not call it thus?'

'Flour,' added Vincenzo.

'My dear, do you really mean that you believe in dreams?'

'Oh, yes, every one does. Nanna can tell what nearly every dream means. Before Vincenzo's accident she dreamed of water — that means tears; and she was so unhappy all that Sunday, knowing that some misfortune would happen, and, you know, it did; and afterwards, she and I both dreamed we were in the street in our night-dresses, and that means poverty. You see that, certainly, was true, for we were almost starving when you came.'

'And do you believe in dreams too?' asked Mrs. Dalzell of Vincenzo.

'No, not I; but we are obliged to believe more wonderful things still in this place,' he answered, with a smile of contempt.

Irene interrupted hastily — 'Now, don't laugh, Vincenzo; it will bring ill luck. Do they not believe in dreams in England, signora?'

'How much did papa believe in them?' inquired Vincenzo.

'Oh, but papa was — was — was — perhaps Protestants do not believe in such things?'

'Well-educated people,' began Mrs. Dalzell, stopping, because, as the hour of noon was announced by the churches, Irene stood up, Nanna crossed herself, and Vincenzo, too, assumed a serious attitude. After a few moments Nanna took up her knitting again; Irene sat down; and Vincenzo, seeing their visitor's look of perplexity, said, 'The *Angelus;* at noon every one repeats it. Did you never notice men taking off their hats in the street when it is noon?'

'But I thought you were Protestants.'

'We are, but mamma taught us to say the *Angelus;* she thought one thing right, and papa another. I believe as he did, but Nanna has taught Irene all sorts of nonsense.'

'Oh, Vincenzo!'

'Well, really, I cannot accept the history of Sta. Filomena on the same ground as I do St. Paul's; and Nanna knows much more about that Sta. Filomena than she does of the Apostles.

Really one is told to believe so much that one is ready to believe nothing.'

Mrs. Dalzell found that from being children of a Protestant, the brother and sister had never had the advantage of such education as otherwise would have come within their reach in Rome; they had not attended any of the classes or catechizings to which Roman Catholic children are summoned. They had never been to any kind of school, and Irene had been almost entirely left to Nanna's care. English both she and Vincenzo spoke easily, but read with difficulty. Mrs. Dalzell offered books to the latter, and would not seem to see that he received the proposal gratefully, but not eagerly. She took Irene away with her, without fully informing her how important was the impending interview with Madame Marriotti, but telling her enough of the *cantatrice* to inspire a respect for her judgment. Irene had never heard of her. Madame Marriotti's public days were past before Irene ever saw the inside of a theatre, but when she heard that the lady had been a prima donna in London, her awe and respect were boundless. Her own wildest dreams had never reached such a height; she believed that nothing but diamonds and rubies were showered on public singers in that capital of golden streets!

Madame Marriotti had never thought again of the affair, and was in a not infrequent mood of nervous irritability, which augured ill for a candid judgment. Mrs. Dalzell regretted that she had brought Irene, and was growing very nervous herself. To cut matters short she took up a heap of popular songs and asked Irene if she knew any of them. The girl withdrew her earnest glance from Madame Marriotti for the first time since she entered, and pointed out a favorite popular air.

'Well, let us hear whether you can sing it,' said Madame Marriotti reluctantly, but going to her piano and striking the first notes. Irene came to her side and obeyed. Mrs. Dalzell watched, with a half smile, her friend's start of surprise and the deep attention with which she listened.

'Can you sing this?' she asked, without any comment, as Irene paused. 'You don't know it? Oh, yes, you do; listen, La, la, la, la,'—humming the first bars. Finding that her young

visitor really did not know it, she made an impatient gesture and sang it herself, playing the accompaniment, looking from time to time at Irene, who listened entranced, and exclaimed in English to Mrs. Dalzell, 'But it is a marvel! I never heard any singing like that!'

'Not Madame St. Simon's?'

'Oh, no, no, no, this is quite different; this is beautiful—most beautiful!'

Now Madame Marriotti, though she professed not to understand English, had lived quite long enough in London to comprehend every word, and the young girl's admiration pleased her, though she had had the homages of illustrious audiences laid at her feet till she was weary of them.

'Well,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'Well, she will do, I think. I must consider. Here, my dear; you want to be a cantatrice, they tell me; I was one myself, and I know the life; now listen to me.'

Thereupon followed a very unflattered picture of the trials of a celebrated singer, at the end of which she waited to hear what Irene had to say.

'But, if the signora had foreseen all this, she would still have been a cantatrice.'

'Not for fame or fortune, though. I found both pleasant enough; but if that had been all, half the heart-aches would have far outweighed them.'

'I think the music would make amends for all the rest,' said Irene.

'If you feel that, you are good for something. There, we have talked enough about it; what are you going to do with the child now, Mrs. Dalzell? I want you to sit a little longer; can't she go home now?'

'If she knows her way.'

'Yes, yes, but whom has she to go with? You are not going alone, my dear?'

'Oh, no,' answered Irene, shrinking.

'I had not thought of that,' began Mrs. Dalzell.

'But you should think about it, my dear. Italian girls can't go scampering about the streets like your English ones; we don't consider it respectable. Can't your servant escort her?'

'Yes, but you must let me go to look for some books for Vincenzo.'

When she returned she found Madame Marriotti still at the piano, playing a few bars now and then and meditating. She looked up and said abruptly, 'It would be a thousand pities not to cultivate such a voice as that.'

'So I think, but the life ——'

'Oh, the life, the life; I know many public singers whose names stand as high as any lady's name in England. I myself can witness that it is a life which can be made an honor; if it have great temptations, it has great rewards for those who are real votaries, who look upon it as an art — not a trade. If this child were well trained, brought up properly, if she had some good quiet friends to look after her, she might do admirably; and with the talent she has, she will be a cantatrice whether you like it or not. It would be a sin to let the St. Simon demoralize her voice.'

'If she had but some better teaching than the old nurse's — that woman has a covetous, cunning look which quite frightens me, and I am sure she is not honest; and then the confusion of religious ideas in these children's minds is so painful.'

'The girl believing everything, and the boy nothing, I suppose — a common case here.'

'No; Vincenzo has more ideas on the subject than I should have expected; but Irene actually professed entire faith in dreams this morning.'

She was interrupted by a burst of laughter from Madame Marriotti. 'Dreams, my dear? There is not a household which does not possess the *Libro dei Sogni*. What! is it possible you don't know what that is? Not know what that is!' She rang her bell, and, when the maid entered, asked, changing from French into Italian, 'Zenaide, I want the dream book.' In two minutes, a worn copy was produced, which Madame Marriotti put into Mrs. Dalzell's hands. Opening it at the first page, she found an aphabetical list of words, each with numbers attached. 'An index?' she said, inquiringly.

'No, not at all. These numbers relate to the lottery. You, probably, don't know the enormous importance of the lottery

here; there is hardly a house in Rome, I'll answer for it, without this book. You don't understand yet? Now, for instance, I dream I walked into the Via Margutta, and a dog came out of a house and bit my hand. On waking, I look for *dog*, *house*, or *hand*, or all three, and take one or more of the numbers belonging to these words, in the lottery. It need not, necessarily, be a dream; for example, in one Carnival there was a frightful accident — some children killed by the *mossa*, the charge of the dragoons, to clear the Corso. Well, there was a perfect run upon the lottery after that; they took Carnival — horse — child — *che so io* — yes, and misfortune and accident too; for, now I come to think about it, misfortune was the only one that drew a prize; No. 32, is it not?'

'But, surely, this is one of the books that would be prohibited?'

'My dear, if you look, you will see on the contrary it is published with the Censor's approval; we must have some amusement, and, besides, it is profitable to Government —

Il gioco in complesso
E un vizio bestiale,
Má il lotto in se stesso
Ha non che di morale!

I wonder who the clever rogue is who writes these things; I had those verses on the lottery sent me in manuscript, under the rose, and my friend only got them in the same way; yet one hears them whispered everywhere. But about this girl — I have a great mind to teach her myself; I want something to do sometimes, and I should rather like another pupil.'

'She could not have a better teacher!'

'But, then, she knows nothing — she has everything to learn. I should never have patience, and, besides, it is an immense responsibility to be any way answerable for a girl; I would not ask a mother to trust her daughter with me for an hour; she would be having billets doux — falling in love!'

'My idea was,' said Mrs. Dalzell, without attempting to persuade her, 'to take them away from their present lodgings, and establish them in some that my landlady had not let.'

'Who is your Padrona di Casa? Cecchi? I had forgotten —

did not I recommend her to you? I forget so many things now. Then you could keep your eye on this girl.'

'She and her brother interest me more than I can tell you, and I might do something for Irene, if I had her constantly with me till June.'

'What will your friends say to your spending your time in this way?'

'You know I came to Rome for mental change; it does not matter how I get it, and I don't mean to neglect the sight-seeing; I am only afraid of thinking of nothing else.'

'So you stay here till June?' said Madame Marriotti, regarding with affection the face of her friend, which had become saddened as she spoke of mental change.

'Till June. I suppose the heat will drive me out then.'

'Oh, I suppose so; as for me, as often as not I stay here all the year round, instead of going to my villa at Florence. I did spend one summer up in the hills, but we got nothing to eat. Well, I shall consider about this child — what is her name?'

'Irene Moore.'

'Mura? — what is it? Irene — Irene Mori.'

CHAPTER IV.

Whither are you bound?
To the palace, an it like your worship.
Winter's Tale.

The lodgings that Mrs. Dalzell had taken were on the second floor in an old palace near the Tiber. One common staircase led to corridors with open arcades, looking into a great quadrangle; each story had its corridor, or *loggia*, to use the Italian word, except the highest, which was tenanted by very poor families, or by artists, to whom abundance of light was essential. About eighteen doors on each floor opened into the corridor, and ascend or descend when you would, a face you had never noticed before was sure to be seen. The palace resembled a large hive of bees, with storehouses underground or in the lowest floor, where no one lived, and magazines of wine and wood were kept; and, as in other hives, there were working bees and drones. On the first floor dwelt rich and titled families, on the *mezzanini* professors and teachers; a staircase higher came untitled people; and higher still the artists and the poor, amongst whom might perhaps be counted a poet, who seemed of a joyous temperament, and, whenever he could afford it, gave a supper to his friends; and rumors of a *réunion* of nineteen other poets, whose songs and shouts were heard late into the night, more than once afforded matter for speculation and amusement to the other inhabitants of the palace. It belonged to a noble and very poor family, who, reserving two floors for themselves in a smaller inner quadrangle, let all the rest, and contrived to live on the small portion of rent which was not swallowed up by mortgages and debts. Mrs. Dalzell had found her way into this un-English

quarter under the guidance of Madame Marriotti, and she had far more enjoyment in the novelty, and even the occasional discomforts, than she could have derived from the luxuries of the hotels or lodgings in the streets frequented by her compatriots, where often more English than Italian is to be heard, and all is adapted to English tastes.

The palace looked stately by day, but its aspect gained indescribably by night, when the moon gleamed on the white fronts of the arcades and threw the corridors within into profound shade, in which mysterious staircases yawned blacker still, leading up and down into unknown regions, and lights glimmered here and there from windows grated like those of a prison. As soon as the reign of night began, ghostly noises too were heard — sounds, like heavy blows or distant cannonading, re-echoed through the quadrangle, and the fountain lifted up a voice nearly inaudible by day, and murmured plaintively, doubtless telling of the Anio, from whence its waters came, and of the ancient aqueduct along which they had travelled many a mile. By daylight all the awe and mystery disappeared, and the palace, though always stately, looked cheerful, like a place inhabited by modern, every-day people — a place, moreover, where they might desire to live, when it was seen flooded by sunshine, with white-winged terns wheeling in the blue air above the quadrangle.

Mrs. Dalzell had come abroad with maid and courier; but before she had been a week at Rome, her maid had become so disconsolate in this land, where she could neither understand nor make herself understood, that her mistress was glad to send her home and manage without her. The landlady, Signora, or, as foreigners usually called her, Madama, Cecchi, spoke enough French to make it a medium of conversation; and when Mrs. Dalzell returned to her lodgings she was admitted by her in person, the padrona having ascertained from a little grated window that it was her lodger who rang. It would not have been easy to find a handsomer specimen of a Roman of the middle class than was this Madama Cecchi, who looked as stately as any duchess as she stood at the door, her black silk dress draping her full and rounded form, her hair rolled back from her brow, and partly shaded by a black lace lappet fastened with gold pins;

little enamel and pearl ear-rings in her ears and a mosaic brooch to fasten her lace collar. This was her every-day dress; had she been in full costume, she would probably have worn white, or pale colors, and a gown of some thin material, far less becoming to her, for Roman beauty requires the deep lines and abundant drapery which, happily, the common people, at least, delight in. Few high-born dames in England could have equalled the natural and stately grace with which she received her lodger, whom she had not seen before that day, and the readiness to hear the something, which Mrs. Dalzell announced she had to say, was expressed in courteous phrases untranslatable, because in any language but their own they would have sounded unnatural.

She preceded Mrs. Dalzell into the anteroom, which had a brick floor and a pile of firewood in one corner; the apartment was by no means splendid, but when, lifting the curtain that hung over the door, they entered the *salotto* or sitting-room, the sunshine which literally bathed the whole room and called out all the colors on the arched and painted ceiling, sufficiently indicated why Madame Marriotti had recommended it. Sunshine is one of the luxuries for which people come to Rome, and though the winter had been a cold one, Mrs. Dalzell had never yet found it necessary to have a fire in the little open stove until evening. A nosegay of camellias, fringed with the maidenhair fern that grows on every fountain, stood on a round table; another table with a marble top stood in a window which admitted the morning sunshine; a third, also bearing a heavy slab of marble, and too high to be used except as a sideboard, was placed between the two other windows looking towards the west; besides books, it bore two vases of artificial flowers, with a stuffed canary bird and several beetles among them to add to their *vraisemblancé;* a heavy clock, highly gilt, was placed in the centre. It being winter, the floor was covered with coarse green and black drugget, or else it, like that of the anteroom, would have been seen to be of brick. This was the sole sign of winter, for there were only thin muslin curtains to the windows; and the green *persiani* outside showed that more precautions against heat than cold were necessary.

Mrs. Dalzell sat down, and told the history of her *protégés*, ending with a proposal to visit the rooms in which she desired to settle them. The prospect of letting them for an indefinite time was welcome to the Roman landlady, who usually could only dispose of them for the season, and she instantly led the way, remarking, however, that she must consult her husband, to the amusement of Mrs. Dalzell, who was aware that the said husband was a very nominal authority: Madama Cecchi was a perfectly despotic, though very good-humored potentate; and 'Nino,' as she called him, submitted unmurmuringly to her decrees. The three rooms proved in every way desirable, except that to reach them from her own apartments, Mrs. Dalzell was obliged either to go out into the corridor, or to pass through the kitchen; but as Madama Cecchi thought this unimportant, Mrs. Dalzell said no more about it. It so happened that she had never been in the little back kitchen before, and she paused to survey the vessels, scanty in number, and of unknown shapes and uses, which stood on the shelves. She smiled and wondered what an English servant would think of the disorder and want of accommodation. All cooking was done at square holes in a kind of brick counter, into which a handful of charcoal was put when wanted; the consequence of which was, that whenever so much as an extra jug of hot water was required, the charcoal had to be lit, water fetched from the fountain, and much time spent before the demand could be supplied, for charcoal was too dear to be freely used. Among the various utensils Mrs. Dalzell spied out a little lamp, and she said, 'I like these so much that I bought one yesterday, but it would not burn last night, and I forgot to tell my courier to examine it.'

'Where is it? let us make my husband look at it — he is *capace di tutto*,' said Madama Cecchi; 'Nino! Ni! come here.'

Nino, or rather Giovanbattista, appeared from another room, bowed to his lodger, and asked what was the matter. He was, like most of the Roman men, a great contrast to the female part of the population, being slender, middle-sized, with taper hands, and not a trace of the muscle and strength which characterize northern nations. Black-haired and black-bearded, he had dark soft eyes, which were at once sad, and arch and subtle, as only

Italian eyes can be, and a pleasant tenor voice, much more agreeable than his wife's; but the sound so exactly like most of those which Mrs. Dalzell heard in the streets, that she was apt constantly to look round, fancying that her landlord was beside her. He turned the lamp upside down, examined it, and inquired if the signora had blown into it when she bought it. On hearing that this precaution had not occurred to her, he shook his head, and evidently thought its defects were no more than she deserved, but at once gave his most serious attention to remedying them. Just then a crash as of falling plates was heard somewhere near: Madama Cecchi hurried off with exclamations of despair, and directly afterwards, her voice and the maid's were heard uplifted to a most amazing pitch; then a sound was heard, as if the girl had received a box on the ear, after which Madama Cecchi returned, cheerful and smiling as before, and not in the least ruffled by what had occurred. Mrs. Dalzell made some remark on the cause of the clatter, and the padrona replied, 'Oh dear, dear, dear, dear! it is this *benedetta figliuola*, Filomena, who makes me desperate;' but the despair did not seem to go very deep, nor the offending Filomena to be very repentant, for immediately after, she came by, looking just as rosy and merry as usual.

The prospect of a new habitation was very welcome to the three whom it chiefly concerned, especially to Vincenzo, who in spite of his carving was fast again becoming a prey to melancholy and languor. He had no friends to enliven him with visits; Nanna was more of a torment than anything else; and dearly as he loved Irene, a girl's society could not make up to him for what he had lost. Any change was welcome to him; the new project was thorough refreshment; the preparations for departure positively delightful; he did not even shrink from the notion of being conveyed over the rough streets, which the others dreaded much for him, and only considered possible, when fully sanctioned by his surgeon. The transit proved less painful than they had expected; but all were thankful when he had been safely conveyed up the long staircases, carried by Cecchi and Mrs. Dalzell's courier, and laid on the sofa in the sunny sitting-room, which was now to be his own. Irene was almost too

happy, between hearing that she was to be Madame Marriotti's pupil, and finding herself mistress of a little room which seemed palatial luxury to her. Her felicity was beyond expression, when she found that a piano had been hired for her, and was placed in the sitting-room; and she flew about, showing everything to Nanna, darting back to Vincenzo for additional sympathy, springing to the side of Mrs. Dalzell with a new burst of gratitude, and making acquaintance with the padrona, whose heart was speedily won by her frank delight, and all whose sympathies were enlisted for the invalid boy, as he lay with smiling, grateful looks, too weary to answer his sister's transports, and only wishing to lie still and watch the various arrangements which kept all the others fully employed. They had brought a few articles of furniture with them to add to that already in the rooms, where there was not much space to spare; and Nino, his wife, Nanna, Mrs. Dalzell, and Irene, were still in full conclave when the clock announced, in that Italian fashion so mysterious to foreigners, that the hour of five had come. At the same time, the bell rang, Filomena opened the door and admitted a boy, with two tin chests on his head, each containing a pan of charcoal and a dinner. This broke off all discussion. Mrs. Dalzell left Nanna to see about one, and retired to her own sitting-room to eat the other, not without a compliment from both landlord and landlady on her looking so well that afternoon. It was deserved; Mrs. Dalzell felt more occupied, more happy, than she had done for many months. Till this time, do what she would, all the beauty, all the associations of Italy, had, at the most, only filled her mind; while at heart there was always the aching of a grief for which she found no cure. Strange! this one little good deed had done what neither Art nor Nature could effect; it had lulled the pain to rest, for a time, at all events; and as she sat alone that evening, willing to let Vincenzo rest, after a day very exciting and fatiguing to him; although her book remained unread, and her work lay idly upon her lap, it was not now because her thoughts had wandered and her eyes were dim with tears. She thought anxiously, yet hopefully, of Irene, and with a still tenderer feeling of the invalid Vincenzo, whose grateful and cheerful looks that day had keenly reminded

her of another invalid, very dear to her, whom she had once tended and watched over as only a mother can watch over her sole treasure. More than once she had found the name of Arthur rising to her lips instead of that of Vincenzo, who, henceforward, must be dear to her, for the sake of that dead son, as well as for his own. It was much to have rescued this brother and sister from destitution; it was like an answer to the question that had often forced itself upon her — What the future could have for her to do? Through these orphans it might yet have an interest. She thought of what it might bring them, far more anxiously than they did — one dreaming on her pillow, with lips parted into a smile, and a rosy flush on her cheek — the other, awake, and taking courage from the thought, that though his own faith had failed, the promise their dying father had trusted in had stood firm, bidding himself remember that on the ruin of his own hopes had risen new ones for Irene, and thinking, with deep gratitude, of her who had rescued them from actual starvation. Surely, with these two near her, Mrs. Dalzell could not help feeling satisfied and cheered.

Thus it gradually came to pass that, while she visited the sights of Rome, entered occasionally into society, and was always ready to take part in any scheme proposed by her friends, these two orphans became Mrs. Dalzell's chief thought. They interested her not only for their own sakes, but as specimens of Italians — a race unknown to her; and Italians, rather than English, they certainly were, though Vincenzo betrayed the English part of his parentage at times, by a certain reserve and steadfastness, joined, however, to much Italian enthusiasm: but Irene, with the soft and brilliant dark eyes of her Sora mother, had inherited a southern grace, an instinctive courtesy, a fire and impetuosity, that never came from England. Pretty she was not; she had inherited none of the beauty for which the women of Sora are celebrated, and with which her mother had been pre-eminently endowed; yet her slight figure, and the open brow whence dark shining hair was braided back, the marked and expressive eyebrows, and the lovely eyes, made hers a poetical face; and the instant changes at word or look, from the serious and pensive expression usual to it when at rest, to archness and

mirth, had a charm so bewitching that many beautiful women would have been far less attractive than Irene. In her, there was none of the abrupt English honesty, so repulsive to Italians. To be charmingly courteous was her nature, but she was no less true than Vincenzo; as Mrs. Dalzell, in time, discovered, after being a little mistrustful of what she had heard her countrymen assert in other cases to be insincerity — sometimes justly, sometimes much otherwise; but Italian faults and virtues are almost equally perplexing to English people, and so are those of the English to Italians.

Mrs. Dalzell had expected to find Irene the best possible guide to Rome, especially as both brother and sister were proud of their birthplace, and spoke of '*Roma mia*' and '*i miei Romani*' with pride worthy of an ancient senator; but, to her surprise, Irene knew nothing about it. Vincenzo too read a book about Rome Pagan and Rome Christian, and their historical associations, with the delight of a blind man when enabled to see. It was the first book that awoke any lively interest in him; he seemed to have found a glorious new world, and Mrs. Dalzell often could not resist a smile as she heard him telling Irene, with the utmost enthusiasm, of some fact trite to all the rest of the world. On questioning Irene, it appeared that she had seen hardly any of the great sights which attract travellers from every land. She had, now and then, gone to the Colosseum, with her mother or Nanna, to pray at the stations; she had been sometimes at the Vatican, because every one goes there on the public day at Easter, and Vincenzo was fond of visiting it; and that seemed to be the extent of her acquaintance with the ruins and galleries. Mrs. Dalzell could hardly believe that she heard aright, and asked if Roman girls never went to see sights. Irene said they hardly ever did; they sometimes went to shops, or on the Pincio, or in the Corso, with their mothers, or paid a morning visit, but not often to see sights; and she could not understand the notion of walking for exercise sake, when asked if she were not accustomed to do so. 'Papa liked walking; but then he was English. When he was alive, he often took her and Vincenzo to the Villa Pamphili Doria, or the Villa Borghese, on festas.'

'Have you never seen any of the ceremonies in St. Peter's? Never been there at Easter?'

'Oh! no. Romans hardly ever do go; there is such a crowd — people behave so ill, and push so. The foreigners say, "We must see these things, because we have come from the ends of the earth to do so, and you Romans can see them when you will;" but then they come and come every year, and do not cease, and thus we see nothing.'

'Besides, as for Easter day, every Romanist is obliged to hear mass in his parish church, unless the priest gives him express leave to go somewhere else,' added Vincenzo. 'The rules are very strict; you receive a certificate to show that you were there, and some days after the priest comes to each house for it, and you would get into terrible disgrace if you could not produce it; your name publicly posted up in the church, and a great uproar made, and it would be remembered against you to a certainty if you wanted anything done for you. All power here is in the priests' hands.'

'I always fancy there is a strange contempt, mixed with fear, in Signor Cecchi's manner, when the priests are alluded to,' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'and his wife once privately begged me never to name politics before him, it excited him so.'

'She is imprudent enough herself; but she knows she is safe with us. If half what I have heard her say were repeated, she would see the inside of a prison speedily.'

'Not really, Vincenzo?'

'Really, Mrs. Dalzell; a careless word is enough to send a man to Spoleto for life.'

The English lady thought this must be strange exaggeration; but Vincenzo did not seem at all inclined to pursue the subject, so she turned to another.

'There is one ceremony that I mean to see and take Irene to this year; she ought to hear Guglielmi's *Pastorale;* what do you say, Vincenzo?'

'I would go if I could,' he answered, 'just to see St. Peter's by night; but as for the music I don't care for that kind. I declare'— and herein he spoke the feelings of many of his fellow-

citizens — 'when I hear it I am ready to stop my ears and run out of the church.'

'I hope Madame Marriotti will teach Irene better,' said Mrs. Dalzell, smiling. 'How did the lesson go to-day?'

'Oh, pretty well,' said Irene, with a blush; 'I am afraid we both got out of patience; but at last she said I was improving.'

Indeed, teacher and pupil had both such impatient tempers, that Mrs. Dalzell had feared the alliance would speedily break up; but Madame Marriotti in her heart was very glad of this new interest, and fast becoming extremely proud of her pupil. She required entire devotion to music, with the most watchful and exciting jealousy, and Irene was ready to give it. Love for her art gave her fervor which took the place of perseverance, and she became so absorbed in it, that Vincenzo silently felt, or more truly, fancied, that he had grown a secondary object with her. Mrs. Dalzell's society, visits from such of her friends as desired to purchase his carvings, and the new delight of reading, kept, however, this feeling in the background; and Irene, radiant with hope and energy, looked scarcely happier than did Vincenzo, lying on his couch, with a table drawn up to it, with books and a handful of wild flowers upon it, or a basket of fruit, destined to be copied in lime or pear wood. Mrs. Dalzell sometimes wondered whether he had quite realized that his destiny was to be an invalid for life. Nothing could change that fiat; they must never hope to see him walk again, except with crutches.

CHAPTER V.

Quem vidistis, pastores, dicite; annunciate nobis, in terris quis apparuit;
Natum vidimus, et choros angelorum collaudantes Dominum.
Office of the Pastorale.

The idea of going to hear the *Pastorale* did not fall to the ground; it was one of the few ceremonies which Mrs. Dalzell could witness, without failing to attend the services of her own church, and she had particularly wished to see it. To go with a large party was the last thing she desired, and she named her intentions to none but Madame Marriotti, who had first inspired her with the wish, and now, much to Mrs. Dalzell's surprise, immediately declared that she should like, of all things, to go too. An expedition at three o'clock, A. M., was such a singular freak for so frail a creature, that Mrs. Dalzell would hardly consent, though she acknowledged that her pleasure in music was always doubled when Madame Marriotti was by to comment on it; and the little old lady was as wilful as any spoiled child, and got her way. Accordingly, on Christmas eve, instead of going to bed, Irene came to Mrs. Dalzell's sitting-room, where she found her friend lying on the sofa, resting till the hour to set out should arrive. Resisting an invitation to share the couch, Irene, with her dog, which, as usual, had followed her, sat down on the floor before an open stove, where a wood fire burned brightly. Irene occupied herself with reading the music which was to be her next lesson, and Mrs. Dalzell, between sleep and waking, opened her eyes sometimes, and looked at the slight figure and bending profile of the young girl, on which the fire-light gleamed. She was absorbed in her task; one hand, unconsciously, beat time on the back of her dog; her brow was sometimes knit, as she looked

with austerity at some difficult passage, and then expanded as she mastered it, and smiled and lifted her eyes, as if to those of some imaginary auditor. Now and then, still murmuring half inaudible notes, she added a piece of wood from the tall basket which stood by the stove, or moved the coffee-pot on its iron tripod into a hotter position; while the dog looked on with great interest, or directed an intelligent glance towards the cups and saucers on the table, as much as to say that if they really intended to have a meal at this extraordinary hour, it was advisable to lose no more time. A ring at the outer door announced Madame Marriotti; Irene sprang up, and went to let her in, disencumbering her of a multitude of wraps; while the old lady diminishing momentarily in size, as she was released first from one, then another, was at last reduced to dimensions fit for a fairy godmother, for which she might very well have passed. She was in a fidget about this unusual expedition, and at first rejected vehemently the coffee which Irene poured out for her; but ended by drinking it, in an absent, unconscious way, while Mrs. Dalzell sought her bonnet and cloak. Irene looked very mirthful and mischievous, and moved so noiselessly, and spoke so low, that Madame Marriotti's nerves were speedily irritated by this mysterious conduct, and she demanded, sharply, what was the matter with her.

'Only I feel as if we were plotting something very wonderful and secret. We are the only people awake in the palace; we are going out directly without their knowing it; it is a secret expedition, and we are conspirators.'

'Nonsense, child; don't talk of conspirators, I beg; we had enough of that in '31; how can you be so silly?' asked Madame Marriotti, uneasily.

'Oh, I think a conspiracy must be so interesting!' answered Irene, gaily, too young to remember much about the troubles that had hailed the election of the reigning Pope, Gregory XVI.

'Heaven help the child! she may live to know more about it,' muttered the old lady, who, though she chose to lead a somewhat secluded life, knew most things, public or secret, that went on in Rome, and was well aware of the storms that were gathering there. 'Mrs. Dalzell, are you ready? Do let us go, if we are

going, and have done with it. Where are you running off to now, child?'

'Only to take Tevere back, and see if Vincenzo is asleep,' answered Irene, running away, with a little lamp in her hand, through the empty kitchen. The Cecchi had gone to the *funzione* at San Luigi, and had not yet returned; the rooms were still as death, and she speedily re-appeared, a little excited and awed by the silence and darkness. Madame Marriotti, still looking ruffled, was wrapping herself slowly up again, an operation suddenly delayed by the loss of a glove. Irene and Mrs. Dalzell looked for it in vain; Madame Marriotti fumed and fidgeted. At last, Irene emerged from under a table, holding up something dark, a single kid finger. 'I am afraid,' said she, half stifled by suppressed laughter, 'that Tevere must have eaten the rest!'

'Tevere!' exclaimed Madame Marriotti, nearly speechless; 'my glove!'

'Poor dog, he will certainly be ill,' said Mrs. Dalzell, anxiously. 'How did he seem, Irene?'

'I don't think it has disagreed with him, though I am sadly afraid he ate the button too,' replied Irene, half suffocated with amusement at the catastrophe, and the indignation of her bereaved friend.

'I hope it will, I hope it will. The ill-mannered, inconsiderate beast,' exclaimed Madame Marriotti. 'Of course I shall catch cold, I must make up my mind to that; so we had better go at once. Such nonsense as it all is!' She hurried towards the door, nearly falling over Mrs. Dalzell's courier, who was coming to announce the carriage. Both Irene and Mrs. Dalzell were quite aware that this irritation only meant, that the unwonted expedition had strung their friend's excitable nerves a little too highly; so they were not in the least disturbed by it, but settled themselves speedily in their corners of the carriage, which had thundered into the quadrangle, and now thundered out again in a way likely to discompose all the sleepers in the palace, and auguring ill for the secresy of Irene's expedition. Till within an hour or two there had been an incessant hum of voices and roll of carriages in the streets: all Rome was abroad,

hastening to and from the midnight mass at various churches; but now all was still; only a few men or women were seen in the dark deserted streets; and the occasional ringing of bells from some church was almost the only sound. The Tiber glided below the bridge, swift, silent, and tawny in the moonlight; not a living creature was visible about St. Angelo, which rose massive and desolate, as if once more a tomb; and the Archangel on its summit looked like some indistinct and threatening form descended from the gloomy sky above. The piazza of St. Peter stretched out in an extent of space which the eye could hardly compass, and the large semicircular colonnades appeared to expand themselves, as though to embrace a world. Lamps were hung here and there against their columns, marking out their circuit in the darkness; lights shone in the belfry, where a deep-toned bell was ringing; the fountains lifted up their silver jets, and in front rose the basilica, dark, enormous, and appearing to retreat before the advancing visitor.

Mrs. Dalzell and Irene united their strength to lift the ponderous curtain, or rather mat, which hung before the door by which they entered; Madame Marriotti slipped in, they followed, and at once found themselves in a world of shadow so vast, so strange, that they stood still involuntarily to gaze. Between every arch stood one tall lighted taper, and under the cupola, the crowd of ever-burning lamps around the tomb of St. Peter shone out, clear and pale, like a garland of stars. Not a flame but burned up motionless in the still, perfumed atmosphere, but on all sides was gloom and silence, and the cupola seemed to rise up and vanish, as if it contained a whole sky filled with soft darkness, like that of a moonless night in summer. Few were present at this hour of the night, and in the area which no man has ever beheld full, even when the jubilee attracts multitudes from every land, the units present on this Christmas eve were scarcely perceptible. Now and then some one crossed the nave; three or four knelt amid the circle of light at the Apostle's tomb; and a woman was bowed before his statue, immovable as the bronze figure above her. All the color, the splendor, the ornament, all that delights or displeases the eye by day, was now blended together; and doubtless it was this absence of striking detail that

gave the impression of boundless space in the building, which by day seems in comparison small.

Mrs. Dalzell walked slowly up the nave towards the eastern end, where were seats erected for the public functionaries and the ladies who would be present at the great ceremony of the morrow. Mrs. Dalzell took her place here, and sat waiting and expecting the service to begin; Madame Marriotti had fallen into a reverie, from which a whisper of Irene roused her suddenly.

'What did you say?' she asked quickly in Italian, which she always spoke to her pupil.

'I cannot help thinking the service is beginning in the chapel of the choir,' repeated Irene, looking down the basilica to a spot where lights were glittering, reflected in the pavement like moons in a lake.

'Well, are we not there! Why, where are we? Mrs. Dalzell, why did you come here?'

'Seeing these seats I really thought the service was here, and I trusted to you.'

'Could any one believe such folly?' exclaimed the old lady, irascibly. 'A baby might have known the *Pastorale* would be in the chapel of the choir; now we shall not find a single seat, and I can tell you I can't stand all the time—in such a crowd too—.' While ejaculating this she was hurrying down the aisle; but when they reached the chapel they found, as she had predicted, every bench filled, and a crowd beginning to collect at the open gates.

The chapel blazed with light; a galaxy of waxen tapers illuminated the altar, and filled the great candelabrum which rose high in a pyramidal form from the pavement, and two immense tapers burnt on either side of a high desk from which a priest would read portions of the service. The monsignori, in their white fur tippets, had already taken their places on the highest row of seats, right and left of the altar; the singers in the galleries above were turning over their music; the canons, distinguished by their grey fur mantles, came in from time to time through a side door; and the schoolboys of St. Peter's, in purple dresses and white *cotte* or surcoats, bordered with lace, occupied the lowest row of seats, level with the congregation, who, for the

most part, appeared to be of the poorer class. Beside the altar sat a bishop, the snow-white mitre on his head, and beside him stood a purple-robed attendant; priests in gorgeous white and gold dresses officiated in the complicated service, which Mrs. Dalzell vainly tried to follow, though she had what no one else present appeared to possess — a service book. Madame Marriotti had made her way through the crowd with her companions, and now stood looking disconsolately at the full benches, without a hope that any one would move for her; but in a few minutes a young man rose, touching his neighbor, and they gave up their seats to the new comers, who all three contrived to find room, while the two gentlemen retired into the crowd — one, however, standing so that he could still see Irene, who was too much absorbed and impressed by the scene to discover that he scarcely ever removed his eyes from the intent face which she uplifted towards the organ gallery. Looking at her, Mrs. Dalzell perceived how differently these gorgeous ceremonies affect the northern and southern minds. To herself it was a splendid pageant; the glitter, the movements of the priests, the unfamiliar tongue, the music of the *Pastorale* itself, which rose and rolled around the chapel in waves of sound, all seemed to her, ready as she was to receive a solemn impression, but parts of a magnificently acted scene, that could not be allied in any way to the shepherds watching on the lonely hills of Bethlehem, and the angels' song of peace in the skies; and she thought with satisfaction of the simple service and the familiar hymn which she should hear on the morrow morning in her own church, even while she acknowledged the grandeur of this night service. But Irene was a true daughter of the south; all that possessed color and light, all that appealed to the senses, touched her at once; and it was quite involuntarily that, with all the Roman Catholics present, she sank on her knees as the music slowly died into a whisper, breathing the words, '*O graciosa Mater.*' All knelt for a few moments with clasped hands and bended heads, and then rose, and after one more magnificent burst of song, the service was concluded. All left the chapel, Mrs. Dalzell still feeling almost as if in a dream; Madame Marriotti whispering with extreme indignation, 'I suppose you know we have not heard Guglielmi's music after all? They actually sang Basili's; I never heard of such a

thing! To come here instead of being in my bed, and hear Basili's music instead of Guglielmi's. I call it a great deal too bad!'

As they came into the portico they perceived that a dense fog had come on; the Vatican loomed dimly through it; the fountains tossed up plumy spray into the air, grey as the mist with which it mingled — dawn was beginning to break. Madame Marriotti shivered, and Mrs. Dalzell looked anxiously round for her servant and the carriage. Discovering both in a few minutes, she came back to where her friend was standing, and hurried her towards it, without noticing the absence of Irene, till she was about to step in herself. Asking in haste where she was, Madame Marriotti recollected that Irene had said she was going into the basilica again for another look. Mrs. Dalzell was just going back in search of her, when she perceived her coming down the steps, escorted by the stranger who had given up his place to them. She sprang into the carriage; the young man bowed to her and Mrs. Dalzell, and they drove off. Irene was questioned as to what had occurred, but there was not much to tell; she had wandered up the nave to the tomb and back again, and when she came into the portico, she could not see any carriage, nor any one whom she knew, through the mist. She was looking round when some one came up, and said in Italian that he believed her friends were just getting into their carriage; and she, recognising the gentleman who had been so courteous in the chapel, was very glad to be escorted down the long succession of steps. This was all; Madame Marriotti had given her two or three searching looks as she told her story, though the whole affair seemed exceedingly simple to Mrs. Dalzell; but Irene related it so frankly and simply that the fairy was appeased, volunteered the remark that the singing had certainly been very well done, and bade them quite an affectionate good night, when they set her down at her own door. There was something very attractive about the little old lady after all; Irene loved her heartily, and had, besides, a child's pleasure in feeling that others were pleased with her: and, when they reached their own abode, she ran gaily up-stairs, singing cadences from the music which she had been listening to, and not in the least depressed by the dim, dreary light of the expiring lamps, or the haunted aspect of the old palace.

CHAPTER VI.

Fair Italy!
E'en in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility.
Childe Harold.

The Epiphany came near, and the shops became filled with pretty trifles; for Epiphany is, at Rome, what the New Year is in France; every one gives presents to every one. Irene was occupied to a degree that a few months before would have seemed intolerable to her: but though engaged in the serious and constant study of music, learning French, reading English with Vincenzo, and Italian with Mrs. Dalzell — nominally for Mrs. Dalzell's instruction — still she found time to knit, in great secresy, a pair of stockings, which were to be a *Beffana*, or Epiphany gift, for her friend. Every Roman girl learns to knit as soon as her little fingers can hold the needles, and Irene took all possible pains to make her present work a miracle of skill. She did it chiefly in her short but constant visits to the sitting-room of her landlady, who, while keeping her own hands warmly round her *scaldino*, admired Irene's industry, looked at the work she herself had heaped on a table by her, and regretted that she was so much occupied that she never had any time to knit or embroider, or even mend. Sometimes she would sew on two or three of the thread buttons made by the nuns of Viterbo, and much favored by Romans, or would add a string when it was wanting; but, in a few minutes, her large soft hands returned to their old position, the work lay forgotten, and Madama Cecchi had commenced one of the conversations which never ended till she was summoned to the kitchen, or Irene was obliged to go away, always accompanied to the door by the padrona, and exchanging the customary '*A rivederla.*'

Madama Cecchi was really a very prepossessing person, and Mrs. Dalzell was glad to find that she took a great interest in her young lodgers. She was well pleased and amused when, on wet days, the padrona knocked at her door, begging pardon for intruding, but she wanted the signorina to cheer her with a little visit; or when she appeared with her fresh, cheerful face in Vincenzo's apartment, to see how he was prospering. As she rarely opened a book, though she had had curiosity enough to read a few prohibited by the *Index*, was more apt to order embroidery than to make it, very seldom wrote a letter, and had an active servant, Madama Cecchi might have been expected to find time hang rather heavy, especially as her husband was engaged in business and absent all day; and now that political causes had made their circumstances unprosperous, she had become, as she expressed it, '*morta al mondo*' — dead to the world — and never went into society, except on a Sunday evening. Her metaphorical death did not, however, prevent constant visits, with her husband, to the theatre — that necessity of a Roman; but as this only occupied the hours of night, those of the day still remained to be filled up. Mrs. Dalzell found it a mystery to the last how the padrona disposed of them; but enter her sitting-room when she would in the afternoon, there sat Madama Cecchi, in her arm-chair, her work beside her, occasionally so far advanced as to be pinned to the heavy cushion invariably used at Rome; a book of prayers near it, a watch in an open case on the table, and her hands nestled round the brown earthenware *scaldino*, full of charcoal, which, when it became less glowing, she poked with her scissors. Madama Cecchi was meditating, and the subject was tolerably sure to be politics, dress, or the delinquencies of servants.

At this time politics were becoming the prevailing thought in Rome; a liberty of speech and sentiment, unknown for centuries, was springing up, and would not be crushed; the moral atmosphere was charged with electricity, and the Romans became more excited with every breath they drew. Madama Cecchi was a thorough Republican; but though louder in speech than her husband, he more than matched her in vehemence of feeling. They knew what oppression and a bad Government

was from dire experience — that experience which turns an abstract horror of injustice and oppression into intense personal hatred of the oppressors — and the friends who came to their house joined them in whispered schemes and views of reformation, which Pope Gregory would have considered as high treason. He was aware of the feeling abroad, as new and stringent edicts perpetually proved: but there was already that thrill throughout Rome which precedes great changes — as the quivering of the leaves foretells that a tempest is at hand, though, as yet, the sky is clear. The contagion had even reached Vincenzo, who looked forward eagerly to evening visits from Signor Cecchi — read Sismondi's *Italian Republics* with sudden and insatiable interest; and discoursed enthusiastically with Irene on the future of Italy; rather to the consternation of Mrs. Dalzell, whose English education had not prepared her to sympathize with these views. Many times she was infinitely diverted by hearing a political conversation between Irene and Madama Cecchi, whose Italian she was beginning to understand, suddenly break off, as the latter recollected some misdeed of Filomena's — that most trustworthy of servants, but a '*donna materiale*,' with no genius, no invention! and then would come a history, told with expressive pantomime, of former servants; one whom she had trusted entirely, and who robbed her, and turned out a *scelerata;* and another whom she could not endure, because, though she was honest, indeed, and never had done anything infamous, she was without heart and without sentiment; and then would come the darling subject of dress, which she had thoroughly studied, and in which, comparatively poor as she was, she spent much more money than ever did Mrs. Dalzell.

Being very much gratified by her English tenant's interest in Roman manners and customs, Madama Cecchi had proposed to take Mrs. Dalzell, on the eve of the Epiphany, to see the market of St. Eustachio, near the Pantheon, lighted up at night. It is the custom of the Romans to go there at a late hour; no buying or selling goes on, but there is a constant going and coming — a turning of night into day — a *festa*, in short. As it happened, heavy rain prevented the expedition; but Irene consoled herself by finishing the stockings, and watching the progress of the

beffana which Vincenzo was making — a carving of pomegranates, fir cones, and other fruits, which he had copied from some brought in one day, by Irene, from a fruit-stall in a neighboring piazza.

When Mrs. Dalzell came into their sitting-room the next day, Madama Cecchi followed, to offer a boquet and witness the presentation of the two other gifts, in which she had taken a lively interest, greatly enjoying the mystery about them. Vincenzo's was first given, and Mrs. Dalzell was much pleased; it had never occurred to her that this carving, with which she knew he had taken extra pains, was for herself. She particularly admired the fruit of the stone pine.

'I often see them on the fruit-stalls,' she said; 'where do they come from, and what are they used for? Surely there are not enough about Rome to furnish all the shops?'

'No, they come from Ravenna; there are whole woods of them there; we spent one summer at Ravenna, and used to sit all day long in the woods.'

'And the gnats!' said Irene, 'I could not enjoy it, because they bit so; but Vincenzo was bewitched by those gloomy old woods, and he never minded their biting. I thought the woods as dismal as the Pantheon.'

'But nobody eats the cones, do they?' asked Mrs. Dalzell, half in jest, which, being repeated to Madama Cecchi in Italian, sent her into a hearty fit of laughter.

'No, no one eats them,' answered Vincenzo, also laughing; 'we put them before the fire, and then they open and the seeds come out: you have tasted them in sausages, surely? — like little almonds.'

Impatient signs from the padrona to Irene now caused her to produce the stockings.

'I hope you will like them,' she said, offering them rather doubtfully to Mrs. Dalzell. 'I never noticed, till lately, that you always wore silk, and there was nothing else that I could make.'

'Yes, my dear child, I like them very much indeed. Do you really mean that you knitted them? It is more than ever I could learn to do, though an old friend tried hard to teach me.'

'Oh yes, I made them,' replied Irene, quite restored to her usual gaiety; 'and I liked making them since they were for you.'

'*Calze sono nojose à tricotare, accommodare, lavare, piegare, è refare*,' observed Madama Cecchi, with a laugh. Mrs. Dalzell looked an inquiry, and Vincenzo added, 'It is a Roman proverb; we say that stockings are tiresome in every way — to knit, to fit, to wash, to fold, to mend.'

'Then I owe Irene all the more thanks. Now, as I did not know of this custom, of course I have no *beffana* for anybody, so you must tell me what I shall give you, without compliment, as you say here, Vincenzo.'

He looked pleased, and replied, after some reflection, 'I should like very much to have an engraving of Guido's St. Michael — the one in the Capuchin Church, you know. I think I could copy it as a carving.'

'And Irene?'

'A box of English pins, if you please,' was the eager reply.

'English pins, my dear? are they curiosities? I think they are very like Italian ones.'

'Oh no, indeed, they are much better. Papa once gave mamma some, and she only used them on *feste*. We cannot buy them here.' She turned to Madama Cecchi for confirmation.

'No, in truth; an English lady, who once lodged with me, made me a present of some, and, though it is said to bring ill luck to take pins, I could not refuse; I will make you see them,' and she hastened away, and returned with a dozen white pins in a box, and an Italian one to compare with them. The superiority of the English article was manifest, and she whispered, mysteriously, that there *was* a shop in Rome where English pins could be bought; great ladies could obtain them; but it must not be talked about, since pin-making was a monopoly in the hands of one person, and fine and imprisonment were the penalties for importing the article.

'Instead of offering madama a *beffana*, I am going to ask her to do me a favor,' said Mrs. Dalzell, in the best Italian she could muster. An attempt on her part to speak Italian was regarded

by the padrona as a personal compliment, and, with a deep curtsy, she replied, 'Too much honor!'

'I want — Irene, you must translate this — I want madama and her husband to go with you and me to the theatre.'

Instead of translating, Irene, in the effusion of her gratitude, threw her arms round Mrs. Dalzell's neck.

'And tell her she must choose the play and the theatre.'

Something of a sigh escaped Vincenzo; he took up a book, and seemed not to hear the gratified thanks of Madama Cecchi and the delight of Irene.

All classes and all ages go to the theatre at Rome. There is the Teatro Regio for the upper class; for the lower the Capranica, where comedies are acted in the local dialect, and laughter and applause thunder through the house, till any one but a Roman would be ready to stop his ears and rush frantically out, and several others chiefly frequented by the *mezzo ceto*. There is little reading among Romans, especially among the Roman women; and as for the girls, story books are non-existent, and romances can only be read by stealth; but their lively intelligent minds must have some food, and mothers who would hardly let their daughters read *Paul and Virginia*, do not hesitate to take them to the theatre, where they learn at least all that romances could teach them. The stage stands in the place of light literature. Moreover, the theatre is a place, in which to see and to be seen, better far than in the drive in the Corso or on the Pincio; for in the theatre people sit still, looks — possibly signals, too — can be exchanged, and many a marriage has been thus made. A fair face strikes the eye of some one; he looks again and again, and goes home determined to marry the owner. If he be of an ingenuous disposition he tells his parents, and entreats them to obtain the damsel for him; then come inquiries concerning dowry, introductions, negociations; or else, rejecting this course, he takes other means of communicating with the lady of his heart, and in spite of vigilance, almost Oriental, on the part of relations, a romance often begins, and ends — as the fates choose. Mrs. Dalzell knew nothing of all this; she only supposed that she was giving Irene pleasure, and gratifying her courteous landlord and his wife; she would have been incredulous,

indeed, had any one told her that one visit to the Teatro Valle might influence Irene's whole destiny.

Madama Cecchi selected the *Sonnambula* as the opera, and the Valle as the theatre, and the first evening that she could get a box Mrs. Dalzell ordered her carriage, and took the party there; Irene dressed in white, Madama Cecchi magnificent in blue silk and an ermine mantle. She looked discomforted by Mrs. Dalzell's plain black attire, but was too polite to make any remark. Vincenzo had to be left with no better companion than old Nanna, and Irene was half unwilling to leave him; but he cut her caressing words short with an abruptness that drove away her smiles for some time. Mrs. Dalzell made no observation; but as she bade him good night, there was something so kind and compassionate in her tone that he felt that she had divined his feelings, and did not attempt to conceal his heavy sigh. As he heard the carriage roll away, he laid down his book and sank back on his couch, with pale, dispirited looks, and fell into so deep a reverie that he heard nothing of Nanna's chattering. She did not find it out, and went on enjoying the sound of her own voice till he raised himself, asked her cheerfully to fetch his coffee, and took up a copy of manuscript verses which Cecchi had brought in for him to read, with an emphatic warning not to let it lie about. Vincenzo had seen several by the same hand before, and marvelled (as, indeed, all Rome were doing) who the daring poet could be who lashed the corruptions of Church and State with such stinging satire. His works were everywhere read by stealth and in manuscript, but his name remained a profound secret, even to the Argus-eyed police, as was proved by fresh verses continually appearing. These last were in a new strain, so tender and graceful that the writer must have been something far more than a mere satirist. Vincenzo owed him something, for they took him out of himself, and he entirely forgot the bitter despondency that had overwhelmed him an hour before, as he read and reread the little poem, and speculated what and who the author could be, and whether Cecchi knew, a matter about which Vincenzo had never been able to satisfy himself.

The boxes on the second tier at the Valle are capable of hold-

ing six people, of whom two can see well. Mrs. Dalzell put the padrona and Irene in the seats of honor in front, and sat further back, caring much less for the opera than to witness the pleasure of her companions, only regretting that 'Nino' was no better off. Resigned to his destiny, however, he sat contentedly in the back part of the box, which his wife declared was quite good enough for men. The audience was almost exclusively Italian; ermine tippets, just like Madama Cecchi's, swept over the fronts of most of the boxes, and their Roman owners sat within, with attention divided between each other and the opera. Madama Cecchi seemed to know who everybody was, and nodded to her acquaintances, and made remarks on the rest of the audience just as everybody else was doing.

'There is Signora Monteverde! see, signorina, with her lover, Count Antonio. Ah, the Contessina Emilia, look at her wreaths! Ah, good evening, Enrichetta! Look, Nino, two boxes off. Signorina, signorina! who is that looking at our box, as if he saw the Madonna and all the angels here? Why, it is Count Clementi — our Count Clementi — the contessa's son! Ah, *signorina mia!*'

Irene colored, and Mrs. Dalzell leant forward enough to see with what intense interest a young Italian was gazing up at them. She recognised the hero of the *Pastorale*. Irene had to explain to Madama Cecchi, who was much amused and interested, and Mrs. Dalzell was fearful that her remarks might fix the meeting in Irene's mind; but she need not have distrusted her discretion; the padrona would by no means have encouraged dangerous ideas; she would have been horror-stricken at the bare notion of an alliance between the young heretic cantatrice and the noble Count Clementi; and of her own accord she turned to another subject, and asked Irene if she saw a lady who, with a pretty child and a young and very handsome man, had just entered. 'Signora Olivetti and her daughter, and that is young Ravelli, who, they say, is to marry the little one, when she is old enough. Your Madame Marriotti knows the signora. She and her husband are liberal; they have been in England, eh, Nino? Did not Signor Olivetti once say, if he could have chosen what he pleased to bring away from England, he would have had a hat full of freedom?'

Cecchi gave a kind of assenting grunt, which conveyed a warning against imprudence, and the opera beginning, all remarks were suspended. It was evident that the audience were truly and generally musical; for, though they put up with very inferior scenery and acting, the slightest fault in the music was instantly noticed with disapprobation, while a successful cadence from the favorite singer called forth such a rapture of applause, that Mrs. Dalzell smiled, and then looked at Irene, to see if she were anticipating the time when such ovations would be hers. She looked eager and happy, but presently turned to Mrs. Dalzell with a sigh, and said, 'It is not the same without Vincenzo:' and she excited Madama Cecchi's indignation and Nino's amusement, when the opera was over, by her merciless criticisms on the acting and costumes. They went away after the play which followed the opera, without waiting for the farce; and as they rose, the young man who had been observing them rose too, and stood at the door as they came into the street. Irene met his glance, full of dark fire; she past on quickly, but the remembrance of that look haunted her for a long time; all the more that she could not help wondering, whenever she went in and out of the palace, whether she might not meet the young owner; but she never did, and at last chanced to hear that he had gone to visit his uncle, Monsignore Clementi, at his estate near Ancona. The thought of him gradually died away, for she was too busy to have time for romantic dreams, except of fame: and thus happily these two meetings, which might seriously have affected a passionate southern nature like hers, had her mind been unoccupied, had little or no real effect.

Mrs. Dalzell could not accustom herself to the stay-at-home habits of Italians, nor believe that as much air as was sufficient for health could be imbibed by loitering at a window. She declared that it might do for idle people, but not for busy ones, and took Irene out with her whenever she could; and further persuaded herself, that it would be possible to take Vincenzo for a drive, laid at full length on a mattress. He wanted more change than from his sitting-room to his bed-room; medicine had done all it could for him, but an invalid he always must be; it only

remained to see how much variety could be introduced into his life. The vehemence of delight with which he received the proposal betrayed how thirstily he had pined for change; it seemed to him that one glimpse of the green Campagna and the sapphire hills would cure him, and he listened with feverish eagerness to the discussions between Cecchi and the courier, as to the best means of conveying him up and down the long staircases. It was a difficulty! But at last 'Nino' bethought him that certain great ladies never attempted to mount similar staircases in their own houses, but were always carried up in such a chair as he would procure for Vincenzo. When it came, Vincenzo was irritated to find that the long confinement had so tried his nerves that he actually dreaded the attempt; he could hardly make up his mind to let Cecchi and the courier carry him down, and could not help desiring Irene not to watch him so anxiously.

A successful drive on the Pincio revived him, and made the ascent less formidable, and thenceforward Mrs. Dalzell never let anything interfere with his going out in the carriage once or twice a-week. She had a good deal of raillery to undergo from her friends in consequence, but it disturbed her very little; and there was no denying that she looked much stronger and happier since she had had these orphans to look after.

These short expeditions answered so well that Mrs. Dalzell thought she might venture on a long one, and proposed driving up Monte Mario, and letting Vincenzo return alone while she and Irene walked back by another way. Spring had advanced so far, that she hoped to find cyclamens in blossom — cyclamens, so rare in England, so common at Rome both in spring and autumn. She was something of a botanist, and tried hard to inspire Irene with the same taste. Irene believed it was too early for *viole pazze*, but rejoiced at the idea of the expedition, and Mrs. Dalzell asked Nanna how far it was to Villa Manzi.

'I cannot say, signora,' was the reply.

'Can you tell me at all?'

'Eh! a good little piece, *signora mia*.'

'How much may that be?' persevered Mrs. Dalzell.

'Eh! *bella lunga* — fairly long, dear signora.'

'A mile, perhaps?'

'Ay, or it may be two, or perhaps three.'

In short, Nanna had not the least idea, but never thought of saying so. Armed with such accurate information, Mrs. Dalzell ordered her carriage, and they drove towards the Porta Angelica. As they passed through the streets she looked round with the interest of a foreigner, and said smiling to Vincenzo, 'I suppose these things have no charm for you; but do you know I see at once three sights in this very street, every one of which should make a perfect picture.'

Irene followed her eye, and exclaimed triumphantly, 'I see what one is! That flower in the balcony. I suppose you have not got it in England?'

'No, I mean a living flower,' said Mrs. Dalzell, amused, the more because she saw that Vincenzo had instantly discovered the real object of her admiration, an exceedingly handsome woman, who, with white drapery on her head, scarlet boddice, and coral necklace, was leaning from an upper window, with one arm round a water-jar on the sill, while she looked coquettishly upwards to a neighbor with whom she was conversing, at a window still higher, in the next house.

'Now the group below — those burly brown friars, with their hoods drawn over their heads, who are laughing with the women and offering them a pinch of snuff — you would not see such a picturesque group out of Italy.'

'And this is the third,' added Vincenzo, as they passed a fountain at the corner of the street, where a contadina child was leaning, her head supported pensively by her hand, her bright dress giving a touch of color to the picture, while two great, wide-horned, meek-eyed oxen — one white, the other grey — had stopped, and stooping side by side from their yoke, were absorbing deep slow draughts of water.

'And there is another sight which I suppose you would not see in England,' added Vincenzo, as they came in view of the Tiber, up which twelve or fourteen buffaloes, with sullen, retreating heads, were slowly drawing a vessel against the stream.

'No, indeed. What a glorious day it is!' said Mrs. Dalzell, looking up to the clear, soft, deep blue sky, full of sunshine. 'Ah! you two are lucky children, to be born in Rome.'

'Yes, I could not live out of Rome,' said Vincenzo, drawing a deep breath as he looked out on the landscape that began to unfold before their eyes, as they drove up the steep side of Monte Mario.

'You have no curiosity to see your father's country?'

'Yes, I should certainly like to see England, especially Devonshire — is not that somewhere in the south? My father had one or two drawings of his own home — bits of green bowery shade and sparkling way-side streams, such as I never saw.'

'Ah! he came from Devonshire — always a school of landscape painters. And do you really know nothing of his family — whether you have any English relations?'

'He told me that he was brought up by an aunt, who had a little money of her own, and when she found he had a talent for painting, she had him taught, and let him go away to London. He said it often afterwards grieved him to think how she must have pinched herself for his sake, even giving up her independence (for she became housekeeper in some great family) to be able to maintain him; but at the time, he said, he only thought of being a painter. He was not a landscape painter exactly, figures were what he liked best; the Royal Academy in London sent him out here. I don't understand exactly all about it, but he had money from the Academy while he was studying here, and he sent several pictures to it, and his old aunt was so happy at his success. I have several letters of hers still, papa always kept them; they are kind, simple letters. I must show them to you. Before the time came for him to go home, she died, and then he did not care to go back. He made Rome his home, and we were born here.'

'Yes, you are true Romans; but Devonshire is a county to be proud of; it is one of the most historical in England; many of Queen Elizabeth's heroes came thence.'

'I know so little of English history,' said Vincenzo. 'Irene and I ought to read some.'

Irene shook her head, and Mrs. Dalzell said, 'I think plays are the only things this child likes to read. Have you read anything else, Irene?'

'I know the lives of the saints, and some poems about brig-

ands, and I can say a good deal of *Orlando* by heart, and I have read one volume of the *Ebraico Errante*.'

'The what?'

'The *Ebraico Errante:* there is a great deal about the Jesuits in it.'

'Eugène Sue's *Wandering Jew!*' exclaimed Mrs. Dalzell.

'Yes; some one lent papa the first volume, but I never read any more; he said I had better not.'

'Indeed, I think so. And is that all?'

'No, there is the Book of Dreams,' said Irene, looking mischievous.

'Don't you think us hopelessly ignorant, signora?' said Vincenzo.

'Not at all; it is a refreshing novelty to meet with people who have read nothing, and besides — Is this the villa, Irene?'

The carriage paused at the door, but repeated ringing produced no other effect than making a boy look over the high wall, and ask if they had permission to enter. Hearing that they had not, he perched himself on the wall, and regarded them with a grin at their dilemma. Irene asked if a permit were really necessary; and, probably fancying the whole party were foreigners, he pretended not to understand, to her boundless indignation. Vincenzo said that as good a view as that from the villa could be obtained from a field a little further off; and they drove on, disregarding the shouts of the young urchin, who had doubtless intended to extort a bribe. They soon came to a trellised gate, leading into a farm-yard; Vincenzo bade the driver stop, and told Mrs. Dalzell to go through it and make the owner of the cottage close by show them where to go. His own share of the expedition ended here; he returned in the carriage to Rome, and Irene and Mrs. Dalzell were admitted by a peasant into the farm-yard. It was a veritable farm-yard, full of poultry, clucking hens, guinea fowls, and turkeys, and plenty of straw; but there was a vineyard above, reached by little flights of stone steps; the bank, in front of which there were two water-troughs, was faced with stone, and plastered over; and on the plaster was a gay fresco of two women at a well, one carrying a pitcher on her head, the other bearing a child stooping over her shoulder

towards a dog. The illusion was so complete that Mrs. Dalzell at first believed the well as real as the troughs; and then that they likewise were painted. On one side of the yard was a cottage shut off by a reed fence; an orange tree, laden with golden fruit, grew beside it.

They followed their guide through the vineyard, where the narrow path was bordered by spikenard, China roses, and stocks, which he called *viole*. He plucked a nosegay for each lady, and Irene added some of the abundant wild marigold —*primo fiore*, as Romans call it, because it is the first flower that ventures out in spring; and they walked on through a wheat field till they reached a rough fence, where their guide made a gap, and Mrs. Dalzell found that he expected her to scramble through it. Irene sprang down to the ground below, and helped her to follow, and they found themselves on the side of a hill where a wood had been felled, and was replaced by oak brushwood and brambles, rendered more prickly still by the sarsaparilla, which climbed and tangled everywhere. A wide view of the Campagna and the city lay beneath them; the sunlight glittered on the Tiber, and gave a rosy tinge to the snow on the distant hills; but there was none on Soracte, which rose up blue and solitary.

Irene was more interested in seeking wild flowers than in looking at the landscape, but all the botanist in Mrs. Dalzell awoke at the sight of the novel plants around her. The dark leaves of the cyclamens, spotted with white, were abundant; but either they were the autumnal kind, or the season was too early for blossom. A plant with large smooth grass-like leaves proved to be the white asphodel; Irene did not know its name, but was able to give some information as to its uses — a kind of spirit is extracted from it. A second prize with small, intensely purple flowers, turned out to be the Italian anchusa. Mrs. Dalzell sat down, and began to arrange her treasures, whilst she asked Irene if she knew the names of no flowers except violets and roses.

'Oh yes. This is *fior della Madonna*, because it blossoms in what the peasants call the Madonna's month of May,' replied Irene, pulling a twist of honeysuckle from around a dwarf oak;

'and that leaf, which the pats of butter come wrapped in, is serpent's bread or else *giarra*.'

'The *arum*?'

'That's it; and I know the names of some garden flowers; what you call mignonnette is *amorino*, and the pansy is *suocera e nuora* — mother and daughter-in-law. Then there is a white flower — snowdrop I believe you call it — *pan di neve* is our name; it grows in that valley yonder, in the cork woods — you see them, do you not? You should see what flowers there are at Frascati and Albano! While papa was alive we went somewhere every summer, in *villegiatura*, you know — once to Ravenna, once to Ostia; those are not places Romans go to, but he wanted to draw there — and a great many times to Arriccia. Ah, signora! if you would but stay all the summer, and go to Frascati! There are many villas there, and we can walk in the gardens of all; you say we never walk, but you should see us in *villegiatura!* We rise with the sun, and go out while the air is fresh and cool, then we return to breakfast, and perhaps pay visits till ten o'clock, when it grows hot, and we read, or work, or sleep, till nearly sunset. Sometimes we dine in a vineyard. In the evening, if you wish for a sentimental and romantic walk —' (Mrs. Dalzell could not help smiling at the seriousness with which this was said) — 'you may go to the gardens; if, on the contrary, you desire to see the great world, you go to the piazza. Frascati is a city; it has a cathedral. You find the piazza full of people, sitting in the open air, or in the *cafés*, and often there is a band playing. Just before one at night, all who know anything about it fly under cover till the sun is down, and the foreigners look so puzzled by this disappearance. After sunset we come out again.'

'Sunset, and one at night! What are you dreaming of, my child?'

'Did I say one at night? Well! Oh, I quite forgot; in French hours it is seven. They are the same as English ones; are they not so?'

'Yes, I understand that; but you were as incomprehensible to me as your clocks, which Vincenzo declares talk wisdom when one understands them.'

'Then, the rides,' continued Irene, returning to what were evidently her pleasantest recollections; 'you should see us going out on *sombrari* — asses I mean — gentlemen and ladies riding in great parties; and before long an ass is sure to bray, and then some one cries, "Hark! he calls on Jove;" and then the laughing!'

'What does that mean?'

'I don't know; it is what we say when asses do so.'

'It is only the asses who continue to worship Jove; he is quite dethroned in his own capitol, though you still call on Bacchus.'

'Oh, signora, see there, an anemone! Do you think we can get it?'

'What, have you spied out a Campagna anemone? What a purple! certainly violets and anemones are more beautiful here than anywhere else,' said Mrs. Dazlell, advancing to the edge of the slope, whereby she started a hare that had lain crouched close by. It scampered off, and while she was yet stooping to reach the flower, the sharp report of a gun, as if in her very ear, so startled her that she slipped, and could only save herself by clinging to the brushwood. Vincenzo's accident had made Irene nervous: she uttered a cry and sprang forwards. The ground was extremely steep, and as slippery as glass; Mrs. Dalzell vainly tried to re-ascend, and was calling to Irene to be careful, and to see whether the peasant were anywhere near, when the owner of the gun, a young Italian, appeared. He perceived her predicament directly, and hastened to assist her, and she was soon again by the side of Irene, who, by her desire, explained the cause of her misadventure, and thanked him for his timely aid. He immediately sprang lightly down to a spot where anemones were plentiful, and returned with a handful, which he offered to Mrs. Dalzell. She thanked him, and he walked by her side, till they had reached the wheat field. As they crossed the fence again, she observed, 'This will be quite an adventure to tell Vincenzo, Irene,' words which, though spoken in English, made the stranger start, and look at Irene with a smile, saying, 'That speech tells me whom I have had the pleasure of meeting; the ladies who lodge with Giovanni Cecchi, is it not? He is

one of my oldest friends, and I have frequently heard his wife talk of the amiable brother and sister who live with her, and of the great goodness of this lady.'

'Yes, we do live there,' replied Irene with a questioning glance, to which he replied with, 'Have you ever heard her name Leone Nota?'

Irene remembered that the padrona always spoke of him as *un bravissimo giovane*. Her smile answered his question, and he continued eagerly — 'She has often spoken of you to me, and how much you and your brother love each other.'

'There are but two of us,' answered Irene, rather sadly.

'Even so you are far richer than I — rich too in this friend.'

'Oh yes, indeed. Have you no brother, nor sister?'

'I have two sisters,' he answered.

'But then —?' said Irene, inquiringly.

'One is but just married,' he returned.

'But the other?'

'A nun,' replied Leone, with a look of sudden gloom. Irene's face expressed so much interest, that he added, 'A nun in the convent of the *Battestine*.'

'Where is that?' asked Mrs. Dalzell, who had followed the conversation with tolerable ease.

'Near the Piazza Barberini,' he answered, but his manner showed that the subject was unwelcome.

'Still you have one sister whom you can see constantly,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'It is true, but hitherto we have scarcely seen each other. She was educated at Sta. Rufina.'

'Ah!' said Irene, comprehendingly; but, perceiving that Mrs. Dalzell did not see why this fact should naturally occasion an estrangement, she explained that girls are frequently sent to convents when they are four or five years old, leaving them only at sixteen or seventeen, often to be married to some one whom they have never seen. There are no holidays, so that though their families may visit them once or twice a month, they know very little of their homes, and brothers and sisters are almost strangers.

'Every one says that Vincenzo and I are an English brother and sister, not Italian,' she added.

'I have often wished to know your brother,' said Leone, looking at the elder lady for encouragement, aware that he must not expect any from the younger. Mrs. Dalzell liked his looks and manner, and hearing that he was a friend of her landlord, encouraged him to pay Vincenzo a visit, thinking that a new friend would be a great advantage to him. Leone's look of vivid delight surprised her; she could not understand why the acquaintance was such an object to him, nor was she enlightened by his saying to Irene, 'Your brother reads much, does he not? He can get books here?'

'Oh yes, since he has been ill he has read a great deal; the Signora Dalzell lends him books, and he has them from the church library; I bring him one every Sunday.'

'Ah! you have a library — it is only for Protestants, of course. The German artists have one also; I sometimes get books thence through a friend of mine.'

'You know German!' said Mrs. Dalzell, with an intonation of wonder, for she knew that it was an unusual accomplishment among Romans, to whom the language presented great difficulties, and who, moreover, were little given to study. 'I thought you all detested the Germans and their language.'

'We distinguish between the Austrians and the rest of Germany, signora; I do not think the language is *antipatico* to us, but the difficulties are immense to one who only has a dictionary and grammar to help him.'

'But why do you not have a master?' asked Irene.

'Because I am too poor,' he answered simply. 'I suppose the fact of the Germans possessing so good a library here, explains why the shops are so poor in German books, and why they are so very dear.'

'Have you studied English?' asked Mrs. Dalzell.

'Yes, in the same way. I have wished continually to know some English — and now I have found them,' said Leone, with a look at Irene.

'Yes, the signora is quite English,' she replied, never supposing, for an instant, he could mean herself, till Mrs. Dalzell said, laughingly —

'The signorina thinks herself "quite" Italian.'

'I!' cried Irene, coloring with displeasure at the idea that any one could think her otherwise — 'I am Roman — we were born here.'

'You speak like a true Roman, which I dare say you have found out that I am not,' replied Leone, entertained by the indignant manner in which she spoke; 'but Signora Cecchi told me your father was English.'

'My mother was Italian — from *il Regno;* she came from Sora.'

'Ah!' said Leone, perceiving now why Irene had a cast of feature which, though entirely foreign, was quite unlike the low-browed, dark-eyed, glowing Roman women — 'Sora — it has always been celebrated for its beautiful women.'

'Ah! you should have seen mamma's picture,' said Irene. 'Papa painted her before they married, when she still wore the Sora dress. She left it off when she came here, because people looked at her so much, but sometimes she put it on again to please him.'

'You have the portrait, of course?'

'No,' answered Irene, sadly.

'What has become of it?'

'It was sold when we were poor,' she answered, tears filling her eyes.

'Forgive me, signorina,' said Leone, earnestly, and distressed at having called up painful recollections.

'Oh, there is nothing to forgive; if I think of it now, it is only to be grateful to the dear signora, who came and helped us,' said Irene, clasping and kissing Mrs. Dalzell's hand, in pretty southern gratitude; 'she is so good — so good to us!'

'Would it be impossible to recover that picture?' said Mrs. Dalzell, smiling but embarrassed, like a true Englishwoman as she was. Leone's face repeated the question.

'Oh, I think so. I do not know who bought it; it went to the Monte — it ought to have sold for a great deal of money, Vincenzo said. Papa's name was in one corner — Vincent Moore — and the date. All our pretty sketches went too, and Vincenzo's frames! We ate them all up, as Nanna says; and at last we

had nothing left to eat except Tevere! I really think we must have eaten him too, if the signora had not come.'

To prevent any more gratitude, Mrs. Dalzell asked if there were not magnificent libraries in Rome; she had heard of one at the Minerva.

'There are, but they are not open to ladies.'

'No; but I was thinking of you.'

'Nor to me. To read there, you must have a permission from your confessor, and if he fancies that you have liberal views — or — or — in short, are not convinced that all things at Rome are perfection, you will wait long before you enter those libraries.'

'And you do not think so, signor?'

'Oh, signora! what an English question!' said Irene.

'I am not afraid to say what I think,' replied Nota, smiling. 'I compare our Government with those of other countries, and I see that we are three centuries behind the rest of the world; I see foreigners sharing Italy amongst them, and a privileged class taking all to itself; I see sacred names and noble offices abused by hypocrites and their tools, and turned to base and selfish ends. No, I am not contented — I am not likely to think Rome perfection,' he concluded, vehemently. 'If you knew our history; if you could imagine how utterly oppressed every one is who is so much as suspected of a spark of patriotism — how the tyranny round us eats into our very souls — surrounds us like one slow, ceaseless fall of burning snow, as in Dante's Vision — you would not need to ask me such a question.'

'Oh, signor, what rash words!' said Irene, looking round with a startled glance.

'It seems to me that you are at least not afraid to speak what you think,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'I am speaking to an Englishwoman, who knows what freedom is; I am not afraid of my words being used against me,' answered Nota; 'but, if need were, there is not a priest in Rome before whom I would not say the same.'

CHAPTER VII.

Mournfully
He raised his looks, and met the virgin's eye.
Whoe'er thou art, look back, when on thy tame
Expanse of life first flashed love's heavenly flame,
And own the date the holy kalend took,
Rose from the worship kindled in a look.

BULWER.

LEONE NOTA kept his promise; he speedily came to pay Madama Cecchi a visit, and when she learnt that Mrs. Dalzell had given permission to introduce him to Vincenzo, she was delighted to do so. An odd kind of dread that she should be held responsible if anything happened — if Leone and Irene fell in love, for instance — or if any other disaster occurred, had made her obdurate to his former entreaties, that she would present him to the brother and sister, of whom she was continually talking.

Leone stood on the highest pinnacle of her good graces; one reason was that he, when fortune had frowned upon 'Nino,' had been one of the few who stood steadily by him. He had a post in the *Dateria* which enabled him to live, but gave him very few means of indulging his natural love of study. His boyhood had been passed in a little country village, where newspapers and books were nearly unknown. The only new introductions in that line were his own purchases, and money was as scarce with him as were books. A convent library, where, by the favor of an old priest, he was allowed to read, was his chief resource, and it afforded just food enough to make him crave for more. When circumstances had caused his family to remove to Rome, he received the change as a Heaven-sent opportunity of entering

the scientific and literary world of which he had dreamed. He found himself mistaken; the kind of society which he had expected did not exist: encouragement to a literary aspirant — especially to one of his turn — was small indeed; the censorship was quick to see the liberal through the poet. But Leone was not so easily disposed of. He saw and felt such evil, such miserable oppression around him, as drove weaker men into dumb despair, but only impelled his own gentle and sensitive, but brave and fervid, nature, into one life-long resistance — one fearless, wrathful protest, already not without effect, though men knew not whence came those trenchant, noble words, which amazed ears accustomed to courtly phrases, or, at the utmost, to sighs smothered lest they should offend those who caused them. Mrs. Dalzell little knew whom she had got hold of in Leone Nota! Cecchi could have told her, but he knew well that in all places, especially at Rome, if 'speech is silvern, silence is golden,' and said nothing.

To Vincenzo the acquaintance was a great event; it gave him a new interest, and connected him with the outer world; and Leone's views, Leone's sentiments towards the present, and hopes for the future, soon engrossed him, almost as much as they did Nota himself. Vincenzo instinctively perceived that they were wider, truer, nobler than those of Cecchi, and began to realize that there was something possible between slavery and Red Republicanism.

Leone's chief object in making the acquaintance had been to study English; but the book was frequently thrown aside for some ardent discussion, to which Irene, if present, listened with corresponding animation; and when Nino and his wife were present, the politics talked would have made the whole *Mezzo Paradiso* (as the Roman hierarchy are called by Roman wits) stand aghast. Yet it might be observed already how much less hopeful a view of the future Vincenzo took than did Nota or Cecchi. The want of health had told upon him, and while taking away the elastic hopefulness of youth had given him something of the sad philosophy of age. While Cecchi saw the bow of hope amid the mists and storms of revolution, and Leone trusted fearlessly to gradual reform, Vincenzo, with his calmer

temperament and perhaps deeper insight, saw that the first step towards change would probably bring down existing institutions in ruins on their heads; but Vincenzo, though he might have spoken words wise and weighty, was not the man for that time. Rome wanted one who could utter a song of rapture and suffering, such as rang from the lips of Leone — from the soul of the young improvvisatore — the poet who 'had learnt in suffering what he taught in song!'

Vincenzo, for a long while, knew as little as did Mrs. Dalzell that his friend was the author of those stirring poems which were passed from hand to hand, and read with eagerness, wonder, or indignation, according to the opinions of those who read them. It was too serious a matter to be lightly owned. He only felt that with Leone came new interests, fresh thoughts, sunshine enough to brighten his whole day; and he assured him that he could not come too often. Nearly every evening found Leone sitting by the couch, talking or studying English. Irene was generally at this time with Mrs. Dalzell, who thought the studies would get on just as well without her, though she did not invariably keep her away. Nota, therefore, had become thoroughly intimate with the brother, while he, comparatively, hardly knew the sister; but an unexpected event made them real friends.

It came to pass that Irene, entering her own room one day, after a morning spent over her music with Madame Marriotti, found a bouquet on her table, tied with so handsome a ribbon that it was plain the flowers were a mere pretext for sending a more valuable gift. She looked at it in wonder and admiration, without perceiving Nanna, who, chuckling, watched her from a corner; then, suddenly catching up the flowers, she ran into the sitting-room too fast to hear Nanna's hasty call. 'Vincenzo,' she began, breathlessly; but he was not there — a headache had prevented his rising to breakfast, and, doubtless, still kept him prisoner. Disappointed, and afraid to disturb him, she slowly untied the flowers, admiring the ribbon, and marvelling much from whence it came. She had so entirely forgotten Count Clementi that she never thought of him; indeed, she believed him still absent; and though Nanna had given several mysterious

hints of late, she had heeded them little. The rose-colored band signified love, as she knew very well. Loosed from their confinement, the flowers separated, and a note fell to the ground. She lifted it in haste, and looked at it, hesitating and coloring. Raising her eyes, she found those of Leone Nota fixed upon her in reproach.

'I know nothing about it!' she exclaimed, involuntarily.

'Pardon me, signorina,' he answered, coldly, 'I merely came to see your brother, and regret to find him so unwell. I will not intrude on you longer.'

'Stay!' she exclaimed, forgetting the breach of etiquette which she committed in remaining alone with one who was no relation — 'You are not to fancy what you now do. I found these flowers in my room; I do not know who sent them.'

'Doubtless your maid does, signorina,' replied Leone; and his look and tone were so bitter and scornful, that Irene lifted her head proudly and said, 'Believe or not, as you please; I am in no way obliged to explain to you; but I did not wish my brother's friend to think ill of me.'

'I believe in Vincenzo's sister, and I believe in Irene,' said Leone, with the rare and sweet smile which gave a wonderful charm to his thoughtful countenance; 'it was not of you that I was thinking but of another. Do you recollect at our first meeting, I told you one of my sisters was a nun of the *Battestine* — a most austere order? Shall I tell you her history? She came home from Sta. Rufina at sixteen. My mother was ill, and had entire confidence in her *cameriera;* Esmeralda, my sister, had a dreary life; I was little at home. She made acquaintance, I know not how, with one of the Fori family. He bribed the maid, and she carried notes and messages, and let them meet in the garden. It was all discovered. The Fori are rich and powerful; they were furious. To save my sister's good name, my mother sent her back to the convent, and told the world that she had gone by her own desire for a few weeks of religious exercise. No one doubted; nothing was more likely. The Fori speedily provided young Ignazio with a wife, and then Esmeralda returned home. Poor child! she had believed his love was as true as her own; this was as death to her. She fell ill — recovered as if by miracle,

and declared that Heaven called her to enter the *Battestine*. My mother knelt to her to dissuade her; all in vain; so we lost her. Ah, signorina! if you could but imagine how sweet a creature she was, and to think that this should be the end!'

'And may you see her now?' asked Irene, much touched by this sad story.

'Once every four months; but what is that? When I have told her how I am, and how my sister Assunta is, what more is there to say? I cannot talk to her of the world,' said Leone, in a tone of intense bitterness.

'But —— she is happy, is she not?' asked Irene, half consolingly, half inquiringly.

'How can I tell? Do you suppose she can tell me that, or that she had any real vocation? Grant she is happy now — she is a child — she has a child's enthusiasm — how will it be when she is old, and feels the want of something to fill her heart? But she will not live to be old; no nun does in a rigid order such as hers.'

'May she write to you?'

'Yes; but at present the abbess sees what she writes. When she is "confirmed in her vocation," as they say, that will not be necessary,' answered Leone, in a peculiar, low, sarcastic tone.

'The *Battestine*,' repeated Irene; 'I wonder I have never heard of them.'

'It is not wonderful; there are but two convents of them. The order was founded nearly a hundred years ago, by a lady who intended to have three; one here, one at Genoa, one at Naples. The Neapolitans did not fancy so strict a rule, or she died too soon — I forget which; the convent there was never built. I only wonder that Esmeralda was content with the Battestine, and did not enter the *Sepolte Vive*.'

'Ah!' said Irene, with a shudder. 'Here, at least, you may see her sometimes.'

'Yes, and also Assunta can; but if Assunta has children, Esmeralda will not be permitted to see them. No, nothing — nothing — nothing on earth,' he exclaimed, emphasizing each repetition, 'shall make me believe that such a severance of all

ties can be pleasing to Him who made them; and never will society be pure where marriage is systematically disparaged.'

'I could not leave Vincenzo, I am afraid,' said Irene, as if she felt that she were wrong.

'Why should you? Believe no one who could tempt you to desert him. Who has a right to break those ties which Heaven has made? But you are a Protestant,' he added, almost with satisfaction.

'You do not think ill of us for that, then?' said Irene, smiling with pleasure; for she knew how differently most of her fellow-countrymen regarded those whom they necessarily considered as under the excommunication of the Church.

He smiled too, and asked, 'May I know what you are going to do with that fine present?'

Irene had fairly forgotten it, and started as his words recalled it to her. 'Nanna must have brought it; I shall tie it up and make her take it back; will not that be best?'

'Do not trust her, however much she may love you, signorina.'

'Oh, indeed, she is true to us; she would die for us.'

'Yet she has tried to lead you into peril to-day, Signorina Irene.'

She felt the truth of this, and hesitated. 'Signorina,' said Leone, earnestly, 'I speak too plainly perhaps, but let me do so this once. Trust honor to no one; guard it yourself and ask no counsel. There are few *cameriere* who can resist gold, and he who sent these flowers is doubtless rich.'

'No — I think not,' answered Irene, the thought of Count Clementi flashing on her mind. Leone looked confounded. She saw it, and added, 'Now, I think I know who sent them; I have twice seen him, but I do not know him, nor wish to know him — it was an evil face.'

'Oh!' said Leone, drawing a deep breath of relief. 'I was a fool to doubt you.'

'Did you?' said Irene, with her brilliant smile. 'And you thought that I should have brought the flowers into our public sitting-room, for all the world to see — Signor Nota!'

'I shall never doubt again,' he answered, looking earnestly at

her, and thinking, for the first time, that she had a very charming face. 'And now I must go to my work.'

'*A rivederla, signor,*' said Irene, gaily; and she carried back the flowers to her room; tied them up, and put the note safely between them, before she called Nanna, who came mysterious and eager. Her eye lit at once on the nosegay. 'What, darling, have you not untied it yet? Don't you want to know who sent you such a beautiful present?'

'No, Nanna; don't you remember I told you the other day not to talk nonsense to me?'

'A fine, generous signor,' continued the old woman, opening her hand a little way, and showing a little gold coin. 'See what he gave the old nurse for love of her pretty mistress.'

The warning of Nota returned forcibly to Irene's mind. 'Nanna,' she said, 'I thought you loved me, and yet you want to make me do what would lose a girl her good name, and get her sent to a convent. Listen to me. You are to take this nosegay back to whoever sent it; I do not wish to know anything about it, and never say a word to me of him again.'

'Am I to drive the poor signor to despair, cruel child? Not one little kind word for him? He is a noble, he is no common man; I can tell you, he loves the air you breathe; he is distracted with love, till he knows no more what he does than a fly without a head. Do you never mean to marry? Youth fades like a flower, and who will pluck it when it is withered?'

'Oh yes, I mean to marry, and you may tell him whom,' answered Irene, malice lighting up eye and lip.

'*Per Bacco!* who is it? Tell me, core of my heart.'

'Rossini,' answered Irene, running away and humming the first bars of *Una voce poco fa.* Turning back, however, she said, seriously, 'Recollect, Nanna, I am in earnest; and another time I must tell Signora Dalzell.'

In spite of all the English lady had done for them, Nanna hated and feared her. Obsequious to her face, she scowled at her the moment she could do so unseen. On the heretic stranger depended Irene's fortune; she had gold, therefore she must be coaxed and flattered; but she was English and a 'schismatic,' and Nanna's opinion as to her destiny in the next world was

more clear than charitable. Irene's threat compelled the old woman to obedience, but she felt deeply injured at the chance of other *scudi* being cut off; she considered herself deprived of a certain income due to her, and therefore softened the refusal of the flowers, and gave hopes for the future, in a way her young mistress had little intended.

After this day Irene and young Nota were excellent friends. Her head was full of her music, and at friendship she stopped; but Leone's feelings gradually became of a more ardent nature. He had never known any girl intimately before; domestic life, like that of Irene and Vincenzo's, was new to him, and their mutual love had struck him as singularly beautiful, long before he discovered that Irene was bewitching.

The three were sitting together one evening, with Madama Cecchi as chaperone, all playing at the game of *Briscola*, which tradition says was invented by four mutes. It is played entirely by signs, a lifted finger signifying one card, a glance another; and as the object is for each partner to communicate to the other what cards are in his hand, without giving the two adversaries time to perceive the gesture, the signs are so momentary, and so comic, that none but Italians, with their eloquent features and fingers, could play at it. The laughter was at its height, and the four Italian voices were making as much noise as eight English ones, when the door opened and the little dark face of Madame Mariotti looked in.

'Oh,' said she, surveying the mirthful party with her glittering black eyes, 'Oh — you are busy, I see — I don't wish to disturb you,' and she vanished.

'Mrs. Dalzell,' said she, returning to her friend's sitting-room, seating herself on the sofa, and deliberately folding her hands, 'are you in your senses?'

'I hope so,' replied the other lady, smiling. 'Why?'

'Why!' repeated Madame Marriotti, growing more excited. 'Why, do you ask? Because — of course *I* am no judge of such matters; you know best, no doubt, but one would think not. Why? — Why, because you let that young Nota come here whenever he pleases, and Irene in the house!'

'My dear madame, he comes to see Vincenzo. You cannot

think how much good it has done the poor boy to have a friend, and they study diligently. Irene is generally with me.'

The little fairy surveyed her friend with an air of mingled pity and indignation, quite indescribable. 'My dear, you are not fit to have the care of an Italian girl, and that is the truth. Do you know that, keep them watched as you will, they manage to receive messages, and fall in love? Do you suppose that young man sees any other girl, without mother or aunt present, as he does Irene? What can they do but fall in love? And I hoped great things of her; I really thought she would do me credit. Now her head will be turned, and farewell music! Hush!'

Irene entered at the moment, the laughing look still on her face. Mrs. Dalzell asked what she had been doing.

'Oh, such a game at briscola! Leone and I won quite a heap of comfits. And Madama Cecchi has been telling us about a wedding that there is to be in the palace. The daughter of that Maestro di Canto is to marry the son of Professor Negri; their windows are opposite, so they used to see each other, and fell in love. She is a friend of both families, and found out all about the bride's dowry from Professor Negri.'

'And probably it was his son whom I met on the stairs, carrying a nosegay of magnificent flowers, no doubt for his *sposa*,' said Madame Marriotti, looking at a camellia which Irene was wearing; 'a *sposo* has a right to make such offerings, but no one else, unless father or brother.'

Irene blushed crimson, but it was not on account of her camellia. She thought of other flowers; but Madame Marriotti misunderstood the blush, and looked at Mrs. Dalzell.

'What is Vincenzo doing now?' asked Mrs. Dalzell.

'He is alone; Signor Leone is gone.'

'Then you shall go back to him for a little while, my dear; I want to talk to madame.'

Irene ran away good humoredly. Madame Marriotti rose, peeped out, returned and exclaimed,

'Did you want to make her listen? I cannot understand your ways! At all events, you saw her color just now?'

'What you said was surely enough —'

'Nonsense, I am never mistaken in these things. What imprudence! what extravagance! And she was really improving wonderfully — wonderfully! I never heard '*Di piacer*' better sung than by her this morning. Oh, why should she fall in love? *Oh che cosa ha questa di far l'amore! che cosa ha questa di far l'amore!*' exclaimed Madame Marriotti in despair. Then, folding her little hands on her knee again, she sat looking straight before her, and spoke no more.

Mrs. Dalzell did not feel comfortable. She thought she had been imprudent; for though she was far from being convinced that Irene felt anything but friendship for Nota, an unwelcome idea suddenly presented itself, that his feelings towards Irene might be less tranquil, and she did not see any way out of the difficulty. All at once Madame Marriotti spoke again in most inflexible tones, such as she only assumed when her art was in question.

'Mrs. Dalzell, I took this girl as my pupil to oblige you, and because I saw she had talent and feeling for music. If she is to be a cantatrice, she must give her whole mind to it; Art is a jealous mistress, no half allegiance will do for her. Irene ought to work steadily for at least two years, and then let her try her fortune on the stage. I say she will succeed; but mind, I will not have her for my pupil for one hour, unless she devotes herself to her art. No nonsensical love-making; I must have a thorough, earnest heart and soul.'

'Perhaps it might be a happier lot if she married, and never knew what fame was.'

'A happier lot!' repeated Madame Marriotti, marking each syllable with scornful emphasis. 'Is that what we are sent into the world to think about? Would you have a single great name in the past, if the men who stand up in it as beacons to all ages had thought about a happy lot? Besides, that girl could not settle down quietly; tame domestic life is not for such as she; she might be satisfied for a time, but soon the void would be felt; she has had a glimpse of the promised land; don't suppose she will forget it.'

'Perhaps you are right,' said Mrs. Dalzell, rather sadly; 'but if the poor child really cares for Nota, what is to be done? I can't deprive Vincenzo of his friend.'

'If there is any good in the young man, he will see that he ought not to interfere with Irene's vocation,' said Madame Marriotti, emphatically.

'You must suppose him to be very fond of music indeed, dear madame!'

'At all events, let him, if he dare, speak a word of love to her as long as she is my pupil. I tell you, on my honor, that if he should, I give her up. She may choose between me and him.'

'Shall I tell him this?'

'If you like. Much good that will do — she thinks she is in England, no doubt,' said Madame Marriotti, in an audible soliloquy.

The effect of this conversation was, that Mrs. Dalzell had very little sleep that night, and therefore had ample time to consider her measures. The first was to ask Leone to tea.

Hitherto she had had no anxieties or difficulties with her *protégés* since Irene's career had been decided; this threatened to be a serious perplexity. On one side, she thought that a real attachment was a shield against many perils both for man and woman, and in her heart she did not like Irene's destination; no Englishwoman could thoroughly approve it. On the other, she could not but feel that Irene in a certain way belonged to Madame Marriotti, and that it might be a fatal mistake to cage the wild bird, whom nature intended for far and lofty flight; but it was by no means certain that Nota would take the same view. She anticipated the conversation uneasily, and plunged into the midst of it, when Leone arrived on the appointed evening. It is to be feared she was thoughtless on this occasion; she entirely forgot that tea was a beverage of which Italians know nothing. Strong black coffee would have been much more familiar to Leone, who probably associated tea with a cold, for which he might have taken a cup; but something more interesting than either coffee or tea occupied his thoughts; he looked round the room as if he expected to see some one besides his hostess, and glanced so often towards the door that she had a fair excuse for saying, 'You are condemned to a *tête-à-tête* evening with me, Signor Nota.'

'I am but too much honored,' said Leone, bowing low, and using, as she did, the convenient French; 'where madame is——'

'Yet I think there was some one else whom you wished to see,' interrupted Mrs. Dalzell, who never could accustom herself to receive or return the compliments which an Italian would have taken as mere matters of form, just as an Englishman does 'My dear,' at the beginning of a letter.

Leone looked disconcerted, though he knew that no rudeness could be intended; but it was one of the cases where an Italian feels the abrupt English speaker to be 'without education,' as he would express it.

'Will you excuse a very plain question?' continued Mrs. Dalzell. 'Do you come here for Vincenzo's sake or for Irene's?'

'I came for Vincenzo's; I do so still, but now for Irene's also,' replied Leone, candidly, but looking at her with anxiety.

'Thank you; it was a disagreeable question to ask, and perhaps you think I had no right to ask it; but ——'

'Madame has every right where Signorina Irene is concerned.'

'I will tell you what induced me to do so. Madame Marriotti has been very kind in teaching Irene; it is of inestimable value to Irene to have her instructions, and her name will give any pupil a certain prestige, as of course you know. She says that Irene has great powers, and I think you will agree with me, that we owe her some gratitude for the pains she has taken in teaching her.'

'And therefore, madame ——'

'Therefore Irene must show it in the only way she can; by studying in earnest. I am afraid, if she guesses what you have just told me, she will have many distractions from her music.'

'You cannot suppose, signora, that a word has passed between us,' began Leone, impetuously.

'No, indeed; but it is of the future that I am thinking. Could you maintain a wife?'

'I am poor, but I must rise in my business, unless ——' A sudden cloud came over his face, as if some unwelcome idea had occurred to him, and he shaded his face with his hand.

'Well, but first there is another consideration. Irene is ambitious; do you suppose she would be contented to lead a quiet life, or even be a *prima donna* here? This is a very small corner of the world to satisfy a great cantatrice. Listen one moment longer: she is too young to make any decision yet; I could not let her pledge herself in any way for several years to come, though I confess that when she is a little older, I would gladly see her your wife; in consideration of which you must forgive all the unpleasant things I am saying, Signor Nota. Madame Marriotti says that the only condition on which she will continue to teach her is, that no disturbing notions are suggested to her by you; and I ask, how are we to manage if you meet constantly?'

'You are right, madame; and if you knew all, you would say I have no right to link any one's fate to mine. I come here no more.'

'Nay, that is the last thing I wish. What is Vincenzo to do without his friend?'

'And what am I to do?' broke in Leone, with sudden passion. 'You think nothing of the torture to which you would subject me. Am I to meet Irene daily, and not so much as attempt to win a kind look from her, while others may seek her as they please? I could not trust myself. Better see her no more.'

'I do not perceive why; but you must settle it with yourself, of course,' said Mrs. Dalzell, quietly. 'If you really cannot trust yourself, so much the worse; I was mistaken in you; but I cannot believe it. Surely, for her sake (I dare say you are going to tell me you would die for it); well, then, cannot you make the sacrifice of being only a friend to her for the next two years? Consider, Irene might one day reproach you if you interfered with what seems her vocation, when she is too young to be really ably to judge for herself. It is for her good that I ask this; and I give you my full leave to speak after her musical education shall have been completed. You say you still come here for Vincenzo's sake; have you any right to deprive him of your friendship? Come, Signor Nota, I trust you; don't tell me you cannot trust yourself, unless you would have me think you are unworthy of Irene.'

Leone's vehemence had vanished under the influence of her composure; he sank into a reverie, from which the cessation of her voice roused him.

'Madame,' he said, 'you are putting me to a hard trial, but you honor me by much trust. It is more than probable that, if you knew my history, you would be still less willing to give Irene to me. At all events, I promise that while she is Madame Marriotti's pupil she shall never guess, from word or look, so far as I can help it, what are my feelings towards her. Two years will alter many things here, for good or for evil.'

'I thank you once more,' said Mrs. Dalzell, much pleased, though she was not quite quixotic enough to believe that he could control looks as well as words, and rather perplexed by the mystery in what he had said. 'I am certain you will keep your word. And now tell me something about yourself; Madama Cecchi has told me a good deal, but I am not sure that I understand what you could have meant just now.'

'Perhaps not,' answered Leone, with a slight smile, feeling how impossible it would be for an Englishwoman unversed in Italian politics, to realize in the least how precarious was the position of any man in Rome who had made himself in any way obnoxious to the Government. 'If I told you that I live on the edge of a precipice, and that an instant may cast me into the gulf below, what would you think? Listen with incredulity, or imagine me guilty of some enormous crime?'

'Not that, at all events,' replied Mrs. Dalzell, looking smilingly at his singularly attractive countenance.

Leone paused and considered. How was he to make her comprehend the necessity of entire secrecy? Suddenly making up his mind, he began his story; one simple enough; his fortune so small, and his prospects, as far as wealth went, so distant, that Mrs. Dalzell, listening with much interest, wondered, in silence, whether they would satisfy Irene, who, as she had rightly judged, was ambitious; but she always felt, when speculating upon what Irene would do or think, as if she had a foreign bird in her possession of brilliant hues, unknown notes, and habits altogether different from those of quiet English ones. Perhaps Irene might, after all, think a home, and the affection of such a man

as Nota, more attractive than fame. Mrs. Dalzell thought there was no comparison between them; but then, she was no longer very young, nor a musician, nor an Italian. She was much surprised by Leone's entire submission, for she was not aware of the enormous authority of parents and guardians in Italy, and Leone naturally felt that it would be ungrateful, indeed, to deny her right to dispose of Irene.

Mrs. Dalzell derived one great satisfaction from this conversation — the conviction that Leone was worthy of Irene; she liked him thoroughly — so thoroughly that she would not be discomposed by the dissatisfaction of Madame Marriotti, when told of the kind of compact that had been formed. She was quite incredulous that Nota would keep his word; or, even granting that such a miracle should occur, that Irene would not fall in love unasked; and she listened disdainfully to Mrs. Dalzell's assertion, that girls were quite capable of feeling nothing but friendship. That might be all very true among the icy northern nations, Madame Marriotti said; it was another matter in Italy, where men choose their wives by a pretty face, or else for a dowry. Two looks were enough. Did Mrs. Dalzell suppose that young wretch and Irene could meet daily with impunity?

'Yet, I do not call Irene pretty,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'She is fascinating: you will see how she will be worshipped. Well, you know my mind on this matter, so take your chance.'

'I trust them both, replied Mrs. Dalzell; and though Madame Marriotti did not perceive the full force of the reply, she held her peace; for in her advancing age, and the loneliness which, in spite of many friends, necessarily closed round one who had no family, she could not afford to lose the scholar, of whom she was secretly very proud, and whom she loved, perhaps, more than she was aware.

CHAPTER VIII.

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a serpent's sting.
Childe Harold.

Coming one day unexpectedly into Vincenzo's sitting-room, Mrs. Dalzell was struck by the utter despondency of his look and attitude. The engraving of St. Michael stood on a desk near him, and the half-finished carving beside it; but he had not touched it for many minutes. He was lying on his sofa, one hand half hidden in his thick black hair, and supporting his white and wasted forehead, while his lustrous eyes shone as if lighted from within. His look was more than melancholy, it was bitter; and Mrs. Dalzell's countenance grew almost as sad as she watched him. She sat down, and remarked that the carving was improving.

'Yes,' he answered carelessly, as if the subject did not interest him.

'Where is Irene?'

'With Madame Marriotti, of course.'

'What is the objection, Vincenzo?'

'None, that I know of.'

'Except that you think that she does not want you as much as she did formerly.'

'No one wants me,' he answered, turning away his head; 'I am of no use to any one on earth.'

Mrs. Dalzell made no answer. He looked up hastily to see the reason of her silence; her face was full of compassion, and he resumed, as if, now that he had begun, all the flood of pent-up bitterness must have way. 'Irene has her music, she is happy; she has a future to look to, while I lie here with this

room for my world, and not a single object in life. Each day the same story — at war with myself, and with less strength every hour for the fight. What have I done that I should be turned into a cripple, a burden to every one? Is it for any fault of mine or of my father, or can a miserable, weary existence like this be pleasing to Heaven? I cannot live without hope. I cannot cheat myself into cheerfulness; I am growing bitter and despairing. I have grown even jealous of my sister, the poor child! But you cannot understand all this.'

'My dear boy, I can, for I have felt it.'

Vincenzo looked up in wonder at that kind, calm face. He could not believe that Mrs. Dalzell had ever experienced the hard sceptical despair that gnawed his own heart.

'You shall hear something of my history, Vincenzo. I was an only child, the heiress of two families; perhaps there never was a girl more indulged or more happy than I was; and my marriage only gave me another home, happier still, if possible. My husband was an officer in the Indian army, at home on leave; when it expired, we went out to India, and there I had two children. We had to send them home in a few years, and I was parted from them — that was my only sorrow, till my health failed, and I was ordered back to England. There was my old home ready to take me in; my dear mother was then alive. We all lived together, she and I and the boys. It was a house on the sea-coast. One day — a bright summer's day it was — my eldest boy went on the water with three more, as gay as himself. I stood on the balcony to see them start; he was standing up, waving his cap to me. No one ever knew how it chanced, but the boat capsized — three were saved, and one was drowned — that was my son. His brother was a delicate boy, an invalid like you; you have many times reminded me of him. He lived till two years ago, and then drooped and died. I knew months before how it must be, and no one can tell how the thought haunted me, How am I to answer their father when he asks for his boys? but I need not have dwelt on that; he never came back to ask for them.'

Her voice died away, and a deadly paleness settled on her face. Vincenzo murmured, 'Killed in the Indian wars?'

'We heard nothing for months; then came a rumor that he had been seen up the country, but he did not write — no, I knew he was dead; I had no hope; and yet that waiting time was the hardest trial of all. We had certain news at last — he had died of fever, with no one near him, but his native servant. That is my history, Vincenzo. And yet,' she added, after a long pause, 'I have found comfort and peace. At first — O Vincenzo! nothing that you feel can equal what I felt, undisciplined as I was. Even now I dare not think of it. There was one thought — the only one that really came home to me, when my troubles were made quite intolerable by the miserable feeling that I learnt from them only doubt and despair — it was, that for a moment, our Lord found His cross too heavy to bear, and I hoped that this might have been in order to bid such as I am to take comfort, and hope to be helped, even though we should sink under ours. I came abroad at last, because my friends said I ought; I cared little about it, but the change did me good, and here I found an interest that has made life welcome to me again.'

'Thank you, signora,' said Vincenzo, with a grateful look.

'I see you are thinking that other people having heavy trials does not lighten yours, Vincenzo; but I told you my history, because I think I can see now what a year ago was all mystery to me, namely, why these trials came. You will know, sooner or later, why it is your lot to be a cripple, instead of an active man; and meanwhile comfort yourself with thinking that he who bears such a fate bravely, is as great as a martyr — would have dared to be a martyr, had he lived in the old days. Why pain and evil exist, we cannot tell; but we can very often wrest a blessing from them. One word about Irene — surely it is a sickly fancy that she loves you less — is it not to you that she turns for sympathy in everything? If she were to come in at this moment, it would be to you, not me, that she would tell the history of her morning.'

'How long shall I have her, signora? I can see that it is Irene, not Vincenzo, whom Nota seeks.'

'He will not steal her yet, and I think you owe him some gratitude. You must make him tell you his history.' Mrs.

Dalzell repeated as much of what had passed between herself and Leone, as she could without breach of confidence, and Vincenzo listened with much interest, saying, when she had ended, 'I would gladly give her to him, but what shall I be to her then?'

'Always her brother, Vincenzo. I don't say, do not set your heart upon her, for I know that the human mind, to be in a healthy state, must have a future for itself or for some one else to look forward to; but you will yet have many interests, if my experience is that of other people. And for yourself — you ought not to think your carving nothing; it may not be as grand as what you had formerly imagined; but it is very beautiful, and you are a true artist.'

'Few artists have had as good fortune as I,' said Vincenzo, taking up his tools again. 'Even this is bespoken already. Did you see the gentleman who came to look at it? Leone says it is successful. What shall I do when you are gone, signora?'

'I hope to come back next winter, you know, and meanwhile you must take care of Irene. You are the only person who can really guard her, for I don't trust old Nanna. I told you about Leone, because you had a right to know. You are Irene's real guardian, young as you are.'

'I have grown old of late, signora.'

'Yes, perhaps that is true; and I must say it is fortunate that a girl, with such dangerous gifts as Irene's, has a wise brother to take care of her.'

'Who could not get into mischief if he would,' said Vincenzo, once more speaking gaily, but stealing a marvelling look at Mrs. Dalzell, as if he could not credit that one so uniformly cheerful, could have passed through such heavy trials. He thought long on the subject, trying to realize from whence came the strength to bear them. He was interrupted by a visitor.

While Vincenzo and Mrs. Dalzell were talking, Irene had come back from her morning's lesson with Madame Marriotti, and had found on her table once more a bunch of flowers crowned by a bit of *finocchio* or fennel, which it is the custom in Rome, at one particular time of year, for friends and lovers to exchange;

each gathering a new piece daily for six weeks, as all during that time a fresh branch must be forthcoming wherever and whenever demanded, and a ring, a bracelet, or some little gift is the penalty for allowing it to wither. Of course the exchange implies considerable intimacy, and Irene was doubly indignant, first at the presumption of the sender, and secondly at Nanna's evident treachery. Nanna was not far off, but hesitated to appear. Irene called her in peremptory tones.

'Nanna, what did you say when you took back those other flowers?'

'Say! what you told me, my darling; but the poor signor was so broken-hearted — fit to throw himself into the river — he weeps like a cut vine at your cruelty. I cannot stir out but he sees me, and beseeches me for news of you; what could I do? There is no harm in flowers — he knows you love flowers.'

'It is of no use to talk to you,' said Irene, whose anger turned into amusement, as Nanna grew more and more pathetic; 'but as Signora Dalzell says girls who feel they are trusted *can* be trusted, and I know she never watches me, and some one else trusts me too — so there — do you see how much I care for flowers, Nanna?' and leaning from the window, she tossed them into the street below.

'Child! child! are you mad? The note and your name!' shrieked Nanna, hurrying to stop her. It was too late. Irene stood aghast; the consequence of her imprudence flashed upon her.

'What about my name?' she asked, faintly.

'It will be in the note! and his own name too, for aught I know!' exclaimed Nanna; 'any curious fellow, who finds it under the window, will make out who "Irene" is. See what you have done, wrong-headed child! Any other girl in Rome would have been grateful and have had a kind word for him, and for the old nurse who risked so much for her!'

'Go down and try to get it. No, it is too late; some one has picked it up, and there are at least six people at the windows as usual,' said Irene, despairingly, looking at the opposite houses, where at half the windows, idlers were leaning. 'I suppose they will say I threw it to him.'

She leant upon the window-sill in extreme annoyance — nay, in alarm. She would be supposed to have dropped the flowers by accident, and the note would be a cause for scandal and gossip forever. Suppose it should come to the ears of Mrs. Dalzell! Who could tell what were its contents? While she was pursuing these very unpleasant reflections, some one rang at the outer door, and an unfamiliar voice exchanged question and answer with Filomena. Irene did not notice it, for the padrona's visitors always entered by the same door; but there was a momentary look in old Nanna's face, as if it were not quite a new sound to her.

'Come, *carina*,' said she, 'there is no up-hill without a down-hill; everything can be mended except a broken neck; don't vex yourself; no harm will come of it. Go to Vincenzo; you have not been near him since morning, and 'tis noon past!'

'Past twelve already!' said Irene, going away, with a slight quick gesture, as if to shake off her uneasy thoughts; and she entered the sitting-room. Vincenzo was not alone; Mrs. Dalzell still sat there, and a stranger was also present, holding the lost flowers in his hand. He looked round as Irene entered, and arose. She recognised him in an instant, though the eyes that had seemed to her black by night, now proved to be of dark clear grey, but the face was as remarkably pale as under the lights of the tapers at St. Peter's; and in the finely cut lips, shaded by a slender black moustache, there was the same expression that had made her previously dislike it, and call it an evil face. She stood confounded at seeing him sitting there with the nosegay in his hand, but she did not betray the thoughts that flashed through her mind; and her countenance expressed nothing but surprise and a little haughtiness, as Vincenzo said, 'Count Pierfrancesco Clementi has done us the kindness of restoring some flowers which you dropped, Irene.'

'I had the good fortune to pass as they fell,' said Clementi, in singularly musical tones; 'I perceived that they had been dropped by accident, and, looking up, I recognised their owner. Twice, as I was just telling your brother, I have had the pleasure of seeing you before; and, knowing that we were neighbors,

and, moreover, possess at least one mutual acquaintance, I ven tured to restore them myself.'

Irene took the bouquet. She could hardly believe her suspicions to be just; for, though this might be a mere pretext for making an acquaintance, he surely would not have run the risk of Vincenzo's demanding whence the flowers came. Her first impulse was to say that she had thrown them away on purpose; but Nanna had brought her up, and such teaching had not been quite without effect, though Irene was naturally thoroughly frank. An instinct of fear, of distrust, kept her back; she was uncertain what would be the consequences of such a course; but her thanks were brief, and she rang the bell for Nanna, and watched her closely when she entered. Clementi looked up as the door opened, but perfect indifference reigned on his face, when he saw only an old servant; and he resumed his conversation with Vincenzo. Irene held out the flowers to Nanna, saying, low, 'Here they are; take them back — do you understand?'

'Yes, yes, my darling — who is that? did he bring them?' asked the old woman, peering curiously at Clementi.

'I think you might know, Nanna.'

'I? is he not a stranger? Tell me, *figlia*.'

'Our neighbor, the contessa's son. Take those horrible flowers away, Nanna.'

'Why, Irene, you are not sending your flowers away?' said Vincenzo. 'Where did you get them?'

'Perhaps the scent is too strong; I think the sender must have been English,' said Count Clementi; 'a Roman would have known better; I perceived that the odor was too powerful, and, perhaps, after all, it was not dropped, signorina, but thrown away?'

'Yes, it was, signor,' replied Irene, lifting her eyes to his; but she could not read his face, only she felt there was something hidden under the mask of polite indifference.

'Poor Leone!' said Vincenzo, smiling; 'I suspect it was a Roman, after all, who sent them; but Count Clementi will not betray how you treated his gift.'

'Is the signor a friend of Leone?' asked Irene, with surprise.

'I can hardly claim that honor, though an honor I should esteem it, but we are, at least, acquaintances, though our opinions

differ — ' he cast a glance of an instant on the books on the table; 'and I have, hitherto, had no opportunity of knowing which may be in the right, he or I.'

'That cannot be Leone's fault; he is frank enough; he has his opinions written on his face,' said Vincenzo, smiling, and alluding to the beard which had become at that time a sort of party sign, and was sufficient to mark all who wore it as *mauvais sujets* in the eyes of the Government.

'He has nothing to lose,' said Clementi, in a tone so quiet that the sneer was hardly perceptible; but it stung Irene, who answered, with a blush of displeasure, 'Every man has his liberty to lose. I only wish Signor Nota had more to peril, that every one might see how exactly he would still speak and think as he now does.'

Mrs. Dalzell smiled, and Vincenzo said, as if in apology for Irene's warmth, 'My sister will never hear a word against an absent friend.'

'I no longer think that Nota has nothing to lose, since he possesses such an advocate; but, signorina, you must not judge too harshly those who hold opinions contrary to your own. I was brought up by my uncle, whose name you doubtless know [a suppressed smile flitted over Vincenzo's face, as he thought of the torrents of abuse he had heard Cecchi pour on that uncle]; all my feelings ought to be, yes, *ought* to be engaged on the ruling side. I am, by birth and education, a *Papista*, as you would say; though I have taken no part in politics, and really know little about them.'

'In fact, you, like Irene, defend the absent,' said Vincenzo.

'I must; and you may understand that, though I may feel that there is some justice in the popular outcry, I must shut my ears against it — gratitude and affection both bind me.'

'And interest,' thought Vincenzo; and he could not forbear adding, 'Gratitude and affection have little to do with public questions.'

Irene looked uneasy, and Mrs. Dalzell longed to change the subject, for even she had learned how unsafe was such talk; but Count Clementi eagerly pursued, 'You are right, our country has claims superior to all others: already, unwelcome as my

doubts are, I do not think exactly as I did a year ago; but you must perceive how difficult it is for me to see more than one side of the question, far more so than for you — you have means unattainable to me. This book, for instance; I have often wished to read it, but I could not get it here; I cannot imagine how you did.'

'An English person lent it to me,' answered Vincenzo, glad to shelter himself under that shield, and rejoiced that Leone was not the owner; for it was one so strictly prohibited, that an Italian would hardly have ventured to possess it.

'Lent — it is not yours? I must not beg for it, then?'

'You know the risk you run in taking it?'

'I don't think there is much more danger for Monsignore Clementi's nephew than for you English,' replied the count; and for once Irene did not indignantly claim to be an Italian.

He took it with an eagerness that made Vincenzo smile, and say, 'I suspect you are more of a *Carbonaro* than you choose to own.'

'No, not yet,' replied Clementi, taking up the volume; 'perhaps you may convert me. You will allow me to return this in person?'

'If you will have the charity to come and see me again,' said Vincenzo, cordially; and the visitor took leave, with a mere formal farewell to Mrs. Dalzell and Irene, at whom he had looked little, and whom he had only addressed when courtesy seemed to require it. She became thoughtful as he departed, and absently answered Vincenzo's questions as to whether she liked their new acquaintance. He had perplexed her, and she did not believe that Nanna would plot against her to such an extent as must have been the case, if he were the sender of the flowers; and yet she regretted that he was to come again, and said she did not like him. And how could Vincenzo talk in such an English way?

'I am afraid I was not very prudent,' he answered; 'but the truth is, a new face is a treat to me. We will ask Leone about him. I never heard Cecchi say anything about the nephew; it is the uncle whom he abhors, and who, he says, maintains spies all over Rome. Fancy if we could make a convert of the count,

Irene! We shall yet see him with as black a beard as Leone wears!'

'I only hope he is not a spy himself,' said she, again inclined to tell Vincenzo of her doubts, and again rejecting the idea.

'Why, he told us his opinions frankly enough; any one must know that he is a *Papista*. But he seemed ready to hear truth; he made no secret of his opinions.'

'No, he made no secret of anything, and that is just what seems to me suspicious. Who talks in that way to strangers except English people?'

'Oh, he knew we were Protestants, and half English; of course, that made a difference.'

'I am nothing but Italian when I think of Italy,' said Irene, unconsciously assuming a manner so like that of Nota that Vincenzo could not refrain from a smiling glance at Mrs. Dalzell; but he was prudent enough to suppress the remark, that she was prejudiced by Clementi's observation on Leone.

Irene was subjected to a close examination from Nanna, when next she saw her, as to whether it really were the Signor Conte; what she thought of him, and if he were coming again; but the thought evidently underlying these questions did not increase her suspicions, since, from her babyhood, Nanna had constantly looked forward to her marriage. Mrs. Dalzell had, indeed, done a good deed in taking her out of Nanna's hands. Unscrupulous, garrulous, unprincipled, the old woman was enough to ruin any girl, and the wonder was that Irene had escaped so well; but her nurse's teaching had been greatly counteracted by her father's, who had given her the same kind of training as he had himself received in childhood from his simple, unworldly old aunt — to please him had always been a great object with her — and before she could speak plain she had learnt that, though Nanna saw no harm in a lie, it was the one thing that 'papa' would not forgive. She had been taken almost entirely out of Nanna's reach since Mrs. Dalzell had had anything to do with her, and had, unconsciously, imbibed the refinement and English principles of her kind friend, while Nanna's influence proportionably diminished.

Irene did not feel quite satisfied with herself; she wished she

had told all she knew about the flowers; and when she went to Mrs. Dalzell's sitting-room to bid her good night, there was something unusual in her friend's manner which startled her, and she hastily concluded that Mrs. Dalzell was displeased with her. She began at once, 'I don't think Leone sent me the flowers, signora — I do not know whence they came.'

'It is of no great importance, I dare say,' said Mrs. Dalzell, rather absently; 'good night, my dear.'

Irene was perplexed, and retired in silence, and Mrs. Dalzell pressed her hand again on her eyes with a deep sigh. Though she had spoken bravely and cheerfully to Vincenzo, his words had awakened an echo in her own heart — had recalled the anguish which she hoped was stilled or gone. She discovered, with a sort of dismay, that there it was still — the old pain — would nothing, nothing, neither change nor time, banish it? She had felt all that he described, and more — much that she shrank from recollecting. She called up all the thoughts that could calm and strengthen her, bade herself remember how similar paroxysms of mental pain had overcome her before, and had been slowly vanquished, as this would be — she would not give way now. But it was long before she could command herself sufficiently to resume any occupation. More than an hour had passed, and still she was sitting in the same attitude, lost in sorrowful thought. A quick tap at the door startled her.

'Come in!' she said, hastily brushing away the traces of tears and taking up her work, and the door opened, and Madama Cecchi appeared in full costume of Louis Quatorze, looking exceedingly handsome, with her hair turned back over a cushion, and powdered; strings of pearls round her neck and arms, a scarlet silk skirt, and white petticoat, and a flowing sacque of blue, trimmed with white fur.

Mrs. Dalzell looked at her wonderstruck, quite forgetting that the padrona had announced to her that she was going that night to a masked ball.

'Here I am, come to present myself to my dear signora!' said she joyously, holding up her black silk mask. 'What does she think? Am I as I should be? Does my dress please her?'

'Very handsome, indeed, and very becoming,' said Mrs. Dal-

zell; and it was a fact that the strong contrast of hues did admirably set off the fresh and lively countenance of the Roman matron, who chanced to be fair and blue eyed, but had all the stateliness and portliness of her fellow-townswomen.

'But, signora, I thought you were *morta al mondo!*'

'Bah!' said Madama Cecchi, laughing. 'So I am — I never go anywhere; I lead the life of a snail, an oyster, a coral-worm, signora! What would you have! It is to please my sister that I go to-night. Nino is going, too; I went down on my knees to persuade him; I said, "Where will be my character, if I go without you?" and he goes. Nino! Ni! come, and let the signora see you.'

Nino appeared, masked in a domino, looking so comical that Mrs. Dalzell could not help laughing.

'I wish you a pleasant evening, signor.'

He shrugged his shoulders, and pointed to his wife. 'It is her doing — not mine.'

'Well, suppose it is! Would you live like St. Alessio, or St. Onofrio, or St. Antonio l'Abbate? Oh, these men, signora, these men! I had to break my heart before he would promise to go; he was as a flint — a rock of granite to my entreaties. And you go nowhere, *signora mia!* You spend all your time in industry; it is a marvel to see. Come, Nino. Good night, dear signora; a most happy night to you!'

'*A rivederla — felicissima notte,*' said Cecchi, bowing, and closing the door, leaving Mrs. Dalzell smiling.

The apparition had, at all events, dispersed her sad thoughts; she was not at all inclined now to sit down and be melancholy; besides, it was full time for people who were not going to masked balls, to go to rest.

CHAPTER IX.

Fidare è un buon uomo; Nontifidare è meglio.
Proverb.

When Leone next appeared, Vincenzo asked for information respecting Count Clementi. Leone, who considered Vincenzo and Irene as his own peculiar and especial friends, was far from being pleased to hear of their new acquaintance; and thought with dismay of the possibility of a rival appearing on the scene. He had little information to give, except that Clementi had of late sought his acquaintance; Cecchi, who was present, added that the count had likewise made advances towards himself; and both joined in marvelling what could be the motive, since every one knew he must be a *Papista*, as the nephew of one who was known as the greatest opponent of progress and champion of old abuses in the whole Roman hierarchy, the suggester of all the new oppressive measures, and the persecutor of every one who held liberal opinions.

Many a tale of tyranny was current respecting Monsignore Clementi, who was very high in the Pope's good graces, and on the fair way to be speedily a cardinal. How the Romans hated him! Even Cecchi hardly surpassed Leone in detestation of this man, whose conduct had gone far to open the eyes of the people to the vices of existing institutions, and to destroy the hereditary reverence for age. It had oozed out that he had been the originator of an order (acted on but too thoroughly), that whenever a liberal was convicted of any offence, the utmost punishment contemplated by the law should invariably be inflicted. He was the very soul of the Sanfedists, that sect more dreaded

than a band of brigands by peaceable men; that sect which, originally founded to aid the Roman Government, speedily became its master, and ruled the whole Papal States by spy, sword, and exile, a very reign of terror.

It was hard to credit that the nephew of this man, entirely dependent on him for all his prospects, could have any leaning to the liberal side, yet Cecchi and Nota were eager to believe so. It would be a triumph indeed! Cecchi thought it was possible that Clementi might be a liberal at heart, but that he hesitated to avow it, lest he should lose the good graces of his uncle; and he exhorted Vincenzo to lose no opportunity of discovering if it were so. Nota saw there must be an acquaintance, and could find no objection, except the one which he did not choose to avow. He had nothing to say against it, but he would have liked to throw Count Clementi into the Tiber.

The count appeared again in Vincenzo's sitting-room, after a sufficient time had elapsed for studying the book which he had borrowed; he carried off another, and had much talk with Vincenzo, which increased the latter's hopes not a little. One visit led to another, and sometimes Leone, sometimes Cecchi were present, till a considerable intimacy sprang up between them all. Vincenzo entirely believed in his new friend, who only very gradually yielded to his arguments, and Nota and Cecchi had both so much confidence in Vincenzo's judgment, so much calmer and cooler than their own, that they were inclined to believe whatever he asserted; but habitual caution made them slow to trust, and there were many meetings before any free expression of opinion was elicited.

Something of confidence sprang up at last, *apropos* of an article in the *Times* on the prospects of Italy. It had been copied by *Galignani*, but the police had taken care to cut it out of every copy at the libraries. Mrs. Dalzell who happened to have the *Times* itself sent to her from England, gave the article to Irene to read, and she translated it into Italian for the benefit of Cecchi and his wife. Count Clementi and Leone came in, in the midst, and she was entreated to begin again. There were ardent glances exchanged as she read, and almost before she had concluded, Cecchi burst forth into comments and approval, and

an animated discussion instantly sprang up, which soon became merged in dreams of Italy's future, so wild, so enthusiastic, so impossible, that it seemed as if none of them had any recollection of Italy's past. Any one who had seen the party, their ardent looks, words, and gestures, Vincenzo's pale face lighted up with excitement, Irene's inspired eyes, and Madama Cecchi's impetuosity adding fuel to the flame — any who had seen how men, women, even frail invalids, joined with one heart and soul in the national cause — and these were but types of hundreds of others — must have believed that a glorious work would be done, that some new era was about to dawn.

Nota and Clementi took leave at the same time, but the count, instead of going to his own part of the palace, said he was expected at a friend's house, and accompanied Leone for a little way. They walked for some time in silence through the grass-grown piazza, where the palace cast a shadow as huge as a mountain, and into the street of the Ripetta. The moon shone in a broad track on the river, creating that lovely *tremolar dell' onde* which Dante celebrated; the plash of the fountain came refreshingly on the ear; in the warm spring night, the streets were almost as full as by day; groups continually went by, singing and conversing, and the voices seemed to rise up between the tall houses which cast their thick dark shadows on each side as if in a mountain gorge. The count and Leone turned again into a narrow side street where was entire silence and desertion, a strange contrast to the one they had just left; and as they passed a dark archway a herd of wild dogs rushed out, without however attempting to attack them, and coursed at full speed down the street.

Clementi was the first to speak. 'We have had a strange evening,' he said; 'I feel as if I had been a traitor, and yet I cannot but own that young Mori had the best of the argument. What a cool, clear head he has — a thorough Englishman, I fancy.'

'You mean to give him another opportunity of converting you soon,' said Leone, referring to an appointment which he had heard Vincenzo and the count make as they parted.

Clementi did not reply for a moment. Then looking at Leone with a slight smile — 'I am more disinterested than you; for I gain nothing, and lose much, if I take the liberal side.'

'What do I gain?' asked Leone, quickly.

'What you think a high reward, my friend, such a look from Signorina Irene's dark eyes as met you this evening. Forewarned, forearmed; I waste no time in seeking love where there is none to give.'

Leone was silent; for though he knew well that Irene only regarded him as a friend, it was not wonderful that he should be slow to say so, and Count Clementi's words were welcome in every way.

'Come,' said Clementi, who had been reading his face with his own penetrating, inscrutable eyes, 'let us meet as friends; I do not ask to know your secrets, but there is no occasion for you to *stiletto* me as your rival, which I am not, and should find it vain to seek to be, even if I could marry as I please. My prospects would be singularly diminished if I should present a heretic to my uncle! *Addio*, we part here; *addio, mio caro*.'

They parted cordially. Leone was of an unsuspicious nature, and Clementi's words removed a weight from his mind. He had not proceeded many paces when he was joined by a friend, who came rapidly up to him, uttering his name.

'Ha! Luigi — well met!' said Nota.

'You are just in time to go with me to Casa Olivetti,' said the other, passing his arm through Leone's, with a warning pressure which prevented Nota from pleading as an objection his want of acquaintance with the family. 'I am on my way there.' Then, in very low tones, 'Have you heard that Donati has been arrested?'

'Arrested!' replied Leone, with a start of consternation, as the color left his dark cheek.

'This morning. Beware — we are watched; don't look round. Did you see that you were followed?'

'I suspected as much. On what charge was Donati ——?'

'Cerigo sent me word privately: I know little, except that political papers and copies of certain poems were found on him; and the police are all on the *qui vive* to discover the author. He denied all knowledge of them.'

'Is it on those grounds?' asked Leone, with agitation.

'No, no, on my honor. They had nothing to do with the business; it was an imprudent speech on Austrian affairs, made in the Café Greco.'

'Is it certain, Ravelli? Are you positive?'

'I give you my word it was. You cannot help him; don't be a madman. I tell you it was his own rashness; don't go and put your own head in the noose. Where are your copies?'

Leone touched his forehead.

'That's well; you will find that they have been searching your room. I have been watching for you ever since I had a hint of what was going on. Where have you been? Who was the man I saw with you just now?'

'Count Clementi,' said Leone, unable to help smiling at the irrepressible astonishment depicted on the features of his friend — features too gay and handsome for one engaged in a conspiracy.

'Count Clementi — ah!' repeated Ravelli, aloud; then, resuming his former hushed tone, 'let all the police in Rome hear it, by all means. Are you certain there is nothing in your desk that can betray you? They seem to have got on the right scent, somehow.'

Leone's brow was knitted. He felt that the instant of which he had spoken to Mrs. Dalzell might be near; the gulf had swallowed up one of his friends; his own turn might come next.

'Nothing — but suspicion is enough. I know their eyes have been on me this long while. Well, there are few to miss me. Poor Donati!'

'Ay — Cerigo will let me know the sentence soon — exile, I suppose; or possibly our paternal Government may be satisfied with perpetual imprisonment — not a heavy price to pay for speaking a little truth once in a way. Here we are, come in.'

As they mounted the stairs of Casa Olivetti, Ravelli suddenly stopped and turned to his companion with a burst of laughter. '*Corpo di Bacco*, my friend, you chose your companion well! You could not have done better, unless you had had the uncle instead of the nephew! I hope that rascally spy who was following you saw him! You must tell me by-and-bye how it chanced.'

'Weathercock that you are, Luigi!' said Leone, smiling, but unable to shake off the impression of what he had just heard, as readily as his light-hearted friend had done. 'Now, how are you going to explain my presence here?'

'Easily enough,' answered Ravelli, opening the door of a room wherein sat an elderly man, busied in extracting such scanty information as is afforded by the *Roman Gazette;* a lady at work, and a pretty, dark-eyed child, seated on a stool at her feet, and resting against her, while she wound a skein of silk. All three looked up with a smile of welcome, as Ravelli appeared, and Leone was received with ready cordiality when introduced as his friend. It was his first introduction to the Olivetti family; his first near view of the pretty Imelda, his friend Luigi's destined bride; but he was too much disturbed by what he had just learnt, to wish to linger at Casa Olivetti, and, staying no longer than ceremony required, he soon took his leave.

'Rather death than exile!' he muttered to himself, as he was returning to his solitary home. 'Exile!' he looked round with a long gaze. 'Never to see my Rome, nor to hear my own Italian! I should not however be alone — truly, I need not fear that; I should find fellow-exiles wherever I went; our Government has taken care of that! There is a chance of imprisonment too. No, I should not make a Silvio Pellico — well, we shall see how it turns out.'

He mounted to his own room, nearly at the top of the house. It was scantily furnished, and its only ornaments were a small bust of Dante, and an engraving from Ary Scheffer's '*Christus Consolator.*' Perhaps, among those seeking consolation, in that figure holding up chained hands, Leone saw his country!

There was a view from the window worthy of a poet; a dark group of cypresses and pines stood doubly dark in the moonlight, which lit up Santa Maria Maggiore, and shone on the distant Colosseum, and cast long gleams over the Campagna. Leone was apt to spend many a night hour at that open window; but he had other more pressing thoughts just then. He looked keenly round; there was no trace of a search. Yes — a moment's inspection showed him that his bureau had been examined, his books moved; and, behold! several German works on

geology, acquired with infinite difficulty, had vanished, — gone, no doubt, to bear witness against him as a student of that heretical science! A smile, at once sad, scornful, and triumphant, came to Leone's lips. He knew that after all he was stronger than any ruler; he had spoken true words, which were written on the hearts of the people; he had uttered what was stirring inarticulately in the breast of hundreds. Though his voice might be silenced in the grave, or a prison silent as the grave, those words would be remembered — he had not lived in vain. He paced rapidly up and down the room, and then stopped and looked out on the landscape. 'Why there!' he soliloquized, 'there stretches the Campagna, as peacefully as if no enemy had ever trampled it, no blood ever watered its turf. It looks solid enough; one would not guess that it was undermined by the Catacombs. The city too — quiet as any Monsignore Clementi would wish it! Who would suppose there were death and tears, and plots and counterplots, under those roofs? Why, under that very one, where the moon shines brightest on the windows, are Donati's wife and mother! Any man but a ruler would hear how the cry of the oppressed is rising up to heaven — ay, it will be heard there, and all the world shall know that it has been heard!' he exclaimed aloud, turning as if in appeal to the picture on the wall. The mild, steadfast look of the chief figure seemed to meet his own; he regarded it long and earnestly, then, suddenly turning away, took down a book from a shelf, lighted a lamp, and sat reading far into the night.

Succeeding days brought no new misfortune. Ravelli contrived to learn that the sentence of Donati was imprisonment, though, like all other trials for political offences, it had been secret, and his fate was only surmised by his friends. His advocate, Cerigo, moreover, paid the penalty of having defended him too warmly, by being suspended from practising his business for two months — a warning to the next lawyer who might be chosen to advocate the cause of a liberal. Leone went out and in, and continued his daily occupations with a sensation as if a sword were hanging over his head; but once more he escaped, though he received an official admonition that the police had their eye on him — a state of things which caused him no

additional anxiety, as he had for some time known it to be the case.

He reflected long before he could decide where, with any prudence, he could for the future keep writings. His own room was manifestly unsafe; he would not let any friend run the risk. Yes, there was one — one who, though Italian by birth, was, in fact, English, and as such was strongly protected — Vincenzo Moore. There was little fear of the police examining his possessions, and none that he might be secretly arrested. He was the man! if he should be willing, after full explanation, to be mixed up in the matter.

Leone speedily had an opportunity of telling him. Madama Cecchi had long been dying to reveal to Irene and Vincenzo his powers as an improvvisatore, and one evening entreated him to let them hear him. He laughed, and bade her give him a subject, and she named the 'Challenge of Barletta,' one calculated to inspire even the least patriotic of Italians. It called out all Leone's power, and both Vincenzo and Irene exclaimed, wonder-struck, 'Leone! Leone! it must be you who write the poems about which everybody is speculating! It is! it must be! how blind never to have guessed it before!' Madama Cecchi looked triumphant, though a little alarmed; but the disclosure led to full confidence between the two young men.

This new interest compensated, in some measure, for the departure of Mrs. Dalzell, which, long talked of and often delayed, came at last. She was reluctant to go; she owed much to Rome, and England was full of painful associations, but there was no choice for her. She lingered till June was come, and nearly every English person had left Rome; but the day fixed for her departure came at last. There were promises on all sides of a constant correspondence, which were kept, as far as she and Vincenzo were concerned. Irene wrote occasionally; when she did, her letters were a rapture of music and politics; she seemed thoroughly happy, and Leone must have kept his promise, for she always spoke of him with the same frank liking as of Count Clementi, whom she reported to have become gradually absorbed into the popular side, and consequently to be out of favor with his uncle.

Madame Marriotti, the most uncertain of correspondents, sometimes sent a voluminous epistle, was sometimes mute for months; whenever she did write, she spoke of Irene with exceeding pride. Mrs. Dalzell began to fear that she made her work too hard, and frequently reminded her how many singers had failed from having overtasked their strength; a warning which Madame Marriotti treated with sovereign contempt, and which Mrs. Dalzell herself would have considered unnecessary, could she have seen how full of life, health, and spirits the once delicate girl had become, thriving on hard work and excitement, and daily looking more joyous.

When Mrs. Dalzell left Rome, she had purposed returning for the next winter, and answered Irene's tearful '*Addio*' with '*A rivederti;*' but it so happened that family affairs detained her in England; and nearly three years elapsed before the last view of Irene, bending forward and waving an adieu, was to be effaced by her cheerful welcome.

CHAPTER X.

To-day the doors and windows
Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum
To Mars without the wall.
MACAULAY.

THE three years which elapsed before Mrs. Dalzell returned to Rome were brim full of those events which promised to realize even the most Utopian dreams of the Italians, beginning from the day when the unquiet reign of Gregory XVI. ended, and that of the Cardinal Bishop, Mastaï Ferretti, began.

The Romans knew little of him; his early life, though one of self-denial and peril, had not been more remarkable than that of many missionaries. As a young man he had sought to enter the *Guardia Nobile*, but was rejected on account of ill-health, which soon ended in a dangerous illness; recovering from which 'by the intercession of the Holy Virgin,' to use the words of one of his biographers, 'he proved his gratitude by consecrating himself to her service,' became an ecclesiastic, and was sent to Peru and Mexico. Trials awaited him and his companions on first setting out; they were thrown into prison by the Spaniards at Majorca, attacked by corsairs, in danger in violent storms by sea; hunger, thirst, and weariness awaited them in the prairies of South America, where once they found no other shelter than a deserted hut built of bones, round which an odor of decay still lingered; and finally their mission being rendered vain through the jealousies of those in power, they returned to Rome.

Pio VII., who had protected Mastaï, was dead; but Leo XII. extended to him the same favor, and gave him the Archbishopric of Spoleto, whence he was translated to Imola. In 1841, he was

made a cardinal, but remained at Imola; and so the Romans had hardly heard of him till, in 1846, he was elected Pope. He chose the name of Pio in grateful memory of his first patron, and he inherited all the difficulties which former Popes had postponed and complicated. Amongst the eager speculations as to who the new Pope would be, no one had dreamed of Cardinal Mastaï, and at first there was a little coldness and disappointment shown; but his first measure, namely, the amnesty to those languishing in exile and prison for political offences, at once aroused that frenzy of enthusiasm which for a time intoxicated both Pontiff and people.

The events passing at Rome had been trumpeted by every journal in Europe, but Mrs. Dalzell had a special correspondent in Vincenzo, who gave her still earlier and more accurate information, and it was with a feeling of interest and expectation quite unallied to those she had experienced on her first arrival, that she re-entered Rome on the night of the 7th of September, 1847. There was just moonlight enough to give a glimpse of the Tiber as she crossed the bridge, and to show where rose St. Angelo; and her fancy seemed already to discern among the distant buildings the palace roof under which slept Irene and Vincenzo. They little guessed who was in the carriage that rattled under their window. It was too late to visit them that night, and they did not expect her; she had left England at very short notice for the sake of travelling with friends, and had arrived by sea. A weary journey the land route from Civita Vecchia had been, along the sandy plains, where reeds, asphodel, and tamarisk shared the ground between them; and the flat country had a desolate look, like some of the ugliest parts of England, and a cheerful thing she found it to alight at the comfortable hotel in the familiar Piazza di Spagna, and be at once installed in her apartment.

By a little past ten o'clock the next morning she was on her way to the old palace, which had been her home for so many months, and where she hoped again to find a lodging; but scarcely was she in the street before she perceived that more was going on than was accounted for by the *festa*, of which her courier had warned her. At such an hour Roman streets are

seldom very full; it is chiefly the higher classes who are abroad, while later in the day comes the holiday time of the *impiegati*, the many who are employed in shops, in warehouses, and professions; but on this morning, high and low were in the streets; the shops were all shut, bouquets might be bought at every corner, the country people were flocking in, in their brilliant costumes, and all faces were turned towards the Corso. Mrs. Dalzell happened to be going in that direction, but when she reached the Corso, she found it was impossible to cross; in the palmiest days of the carnival never had it been so much thronged. A dense crowd lined it from end to end with eager, expectant faces, and there was a ceaseless hum of animated voices; on every story of every house, all the windows were wide open and full of heads. From one and all waved draperies of scarlet, white, or yellow, mixed with wreaths of box and myrtle; the whole people were gathered together, waiting for a great event.

Every one was far too much excited and absorbed to spare a moment's thought to Mrs. Dalzell, and her servant found it perfectly impossible to make way for her. His strong hand and voice at last extorted an answer to his question of what was going on. The woman, whom he addressed, opened her large eyes, and exclaimed, 'Are you a Pagan, then, that you don't know it is the feast of Maria Santissima, and that the Pope goes to the Popolo?' At the same instant, like a rising tide, swelled out the acclamation, rolling like thunder down the Corso where the triumphal arch rose in the distant piazza — one universal voice — 'The Pope comes — the Pope comes — Viva our Pope! viva Pio Nono!' and the mighty throng fell with one accord on their knees to welcome him who had said, 'Blessed be Italy!' while passionate tears, shed not by women only, but by men old and young, testified to the adoration with which the Ninth Pius was regarded by his Romans. The long procession came slowly down the Corso, between the double line of people, a single mounted soldier preceded it. Such a sight had never been seen before; for, on ordinary occasions, the cardinals meet the Pope at Santa Maria del Popolo; but to do honor to the new Pontiff, and to please the people, they had on this day with one accord sought the Quirinal, and escorted him thence, each cardinal in

his state coach, followed by one containing his attendants. Round that wherein sat Pio Nono, placid and smiling as he blessed the throng, were his gallant and handsome guard. Down came wreaths of flowers from every window as they passed, till they were piled high on the Pope's carriage — the cardinals followed in long succession, and ever more enthusiastically rose the shout 'Viva, viva il Papa! viva Pio Nono!'

But there was a suppressed undertone of angry dissatisfaction, as the coaches of the cardinals passed before the eyes of the people, and the dark scowling faces within were seen. Some of these dignitaries leant back, and seemed to hear and see nothing; others frowned grimly, and all, with but two exceptions, looked rather like wrathful captives dragged after a triumphal car, than like men who were sympathizing in the general gladness. They heard the murmurs with darkening looks; two only had a cheerful and well-pleased aspect, and looked round as if the scene were delightful to them. These were men well known for their liberal opinions, and believed to be the Pope's chief advisers; and certain it is, that after the death of one, and in the absence of the other, a striking change took place in the policy of the Pontiff. As the last coach went by, the crowd closed in, and followed up to the Piazza del Popolo, and all who could possibly enter thronged into the church, where high mass was performed, but a great number, hopeless of entering, returned home. Mrs. Dalzell thought she should be sure of at least finding Vincenzo, and went on to the palace; but her repeated ringing only brought to the door a servant girl, unknown to her — short, stout, with rough hair, curling all over her head; and her look of surprise at the English visitor showed that foreigners did not often visit the brother and sister. No one was at home. The padrona? At Santa Maria del Popolo. The signor and the signorina? Gone to see the procession. Even Vincenzo! Mrs. Dalzell learnt that her old rooms were unoccupied, and promised to call again next day. She next sought Madame Marriotti; who would surely be at home, for she hated crowds and ceremonies, and kept away from whatever other people went to see. Yet she was not to be found — gone to the Corso! Mrs. Dalzell perceived that she should get the same answer wherever

she went, and leaving a few hastily scribbled lines for her friend, returned to her hotel.

In the afternoon Madame Marriotti appeared, having just reached home, found the note, and hurried off again without any luncheon; consequently she was nearly exhausted, and had to be fed and revived before she could lucidly explain where she had been.

'No — no more — not any more —' said she, in the short, disconnected sentences, which sounded so odd and so familiar to Mrs. Dalzell — 'not any more, I thank you. Oh, I am half dead. I do not know how I got here, but I found your note. Zenaide said an English lady — "*alta cosi*," marking the stature in the air — had left it. I could hardly believe my senses. What has brought you so suddenly?'

Mrs. Dalzell explained, and Madame Marriotti unfastened her beloved old fur cloak which she still wore as if it had been December, though she had prevailed on herself to put on a lace bonnet, fanned herself, fidgeted, and grew composed.

'Ah, yes, I understand. Then you did not come on purpose for our grand *festa?*' said she, with a peculiar silent laugh, which glittered in her black eyes and on her lips with indescribable malice; 'are we not all a parcel of fools, eh?'

'I don't know, dear madame, but I assure you I found myself upon my knees, with tears in my eyes, this morning. It was wonderfully grand and solemn.'

'Yes, yes, yes, so it was, I dare say; I know at the time I was as foolish as anybody, but to think that we should be all bewitched into believing all this — imagining that the Government and the people are strong enough for it! yet I declare to you we do.'

'I do, for one.'

'My dear, did you see the faces of the cardinals to-day? The Pope, I do believe, means it all; intends to go on as he has begun; but all who know anything about it see that he must come to a collision with the priests or with the people; he can't content both. At first the priests thought it was a matter not worth interfering in; their eyes were opened when he carried the amnesty with a high hand; but now they are afraid, for they know

a straw would light up a revolution — it's in the air, like influenza. A revolution has been a word of ill omen from all ages, and that was why they imprisoned Galileo; he said the world moved, they wanted it to stand still; so they stopped his voice — *ma pur si muove!* So you went to look for Irene.'

'I did think Vincenzo would have been at home, I confess.'

'No, Cecchi and that young Nota contrived to convey him, before it all began, to the balcony of the Café Nuovo — he and I and Irene were all there.'

'And I was standing just below!'

'Ah, we had something else to do besides looking for acquaintances. Did you leave a message for her? Oh, it is to be a surprise, is it? Well, you will see her to-morrow — no, I can't let you go there this evening; you must come to my house, I want you. I wrote to you of the child's *début* last spring; it was quite successful — quite, and I must say it has not turned her head. I don't mean that she created a *furore*, but she showed what was in her; people expect her to be celebrated some day; they go expressly to hear her now, and she improves steadily. She is the best pupil I ever had; her style is only too pure and good for the degenerate ears here, who only want to be tickled, and prefer Verdi to Scarlatti.'

'If I could, I would have come for that *début*.'

'I took a box, of course; I really felt so nervous that it quite knocked me up for a week. The opera was *Le Sorelle* — a silly little thing, but that air — La, la, la, la, you recollect, I dare say — showed off the extent of her voice, and she quite created Elena's character; I had no notion how much she would make of it. Oddly enough, you know Madame St. Simon is here again, *prima donna assoluta* at Irene's theatre; I fancy she hates the child to that extent that she could poison her.'

More details followed; Mrs. Dalzell said, smilingly, 'Leone has told his secret!'

'Yes, the very day after her first appearance,' said Madame Marriotti indignantly.

'Then at least he kept his word, since it was not the day before. You see I was right.'

'I suppose he did keep his promise; yes, I certainly must say

he did. Though I think she began to suspect at last; and if her mind had not been full of her music, she would have guessed long before. He is quite the head of the liberal party here, as of course you know. To think of his having written all those capital poems — I could hardly believe it when Irene told me; we hold up our heads, and are proud of them under this new *régime*. You will come to my house to-night? There will be a few people, just my old friends, for I don't make new acquaintances now. No, he certainly kept his promise,' said she, with one of her abrupt returns to a former subject, 'except that he gave her a canary bird; but to be sure it was to amuse Vincenzo, and a great pet he makes of it. You heard the gun fire this morning, I suppose?'

'Yes, what does that signify?'

'Why, people say the Pope has it done, because he can't understand Italian time, Heaven knows why; — I never heard he was a Turk or a New Zealander, but he got up at twelve o'clock at night instead of morning, or something of that sort, and after that all the clocks had to reform, like the rest of us, and go by French time. The people stop one in the streets and ask what hour it is, for they can't understand the new way. Ah, well, there are changes everywhere, and now we all look at our watches when the gun fires, and take quite an interest in it. Oh dear, how tired I am! And this new bonnet makes me feel quite ill; I hate wearing new things, but Zenaide said I really must, to-day.'

Mrs. Dalzell did not dislike the idea of an evening at Madame Marriotti's, especially as the old lady stayed so long, that it was too late to return to the palace. In her former visit to Italy she had made acquaintance with several of the little worlds of society that revolve in perfectly separate orbits in Rome; and on the whole there was none she liked so well as that which had Madame Marriotti for a centre. It had the peculiarity that those who appeared in it were for the most part rather friends than mere acquaintances; they had sought one another out from having something in common, and Madame Marriotti's name was so celebrated, that it was esteemed an honor to be admitted to her *réunions*, and she was considerably exclusive, and admitted none

who had not something to recommend them. All who came to her house were people worth meeting: every one with musical talent was sure sooner or later to find his way there; but the staple of her visitors were artists and musicians resident at Rome.

Mrs. Dalzell found the staircase better lighted than on a former memorable visit, and that the 'few friends' were in fact a very large party, amongst whom she recognised several who, in her former visit, had often caused her to smile, and silently wonder whether the artist gentlemen cultivated bushy beards to counterbalance the general absence of cap among the artist ladies; but some of the oddest-looking people were precisely those who in England would have been sought after as the tawniest of lions, and their peculiarities set down as marks of genius! Here they were at home, and looked as they pleased among other lions.

As Mrs. Dalzell entered the first of the two rooms which were lighted up and filled with guests, Madame Marriotti came hastily towards her and made her sit down near the door of the second, beginning a rather absent, pre-occupied conversation, appearing afraid that every one who came up to them should betray some secret, and looking restlessly round as she talked at random. Presently the first notes of the piano were heard from the inner room; she half rose, looking very eager; there was a general expectant hush, and then a voice, sweet, pure, and steady, came floating through the rooms, while the words —

Il buon prence, il buon pastore,
Ch' alla terra Iddio mandò,
Come un angelo del Cielo
Improviso a noi raggiò,

told it was a hymn in honor of the popular idol, Pio Nono.

Mrs. Dalzell involuntarily rose and made her way through the throng round the door of the second room, till she could see the animated face of the singer, whose charming voice she had instantly recognised. It was indeed Irene, who stood by the piano, dressed in white, with a gold ribbon — the Papal colors — her looks inspired like those of a sibyl, as she sang, from her soul, the hymn written by Leone in honor of the Pope, in whom

they saw the messenger of Heaven sent to give freedom to Italy. It was the first time it had been heard; the last words of the first verse were lost in a frenzy of applause, which only ceased to allow her to sing the next, and burst out again and again with new vehemence. As she paused amid a fresh whirlwind of acclamations, Mrs. Dalzell looked at Madame Marriotti and took her hand. There were tears in the old lady's eyes, and her voice was unsteady as she said, 'Ah, there is no fame so fleeting as a great singer's; but I shall be remembered a little longer as the teacher of Irene Mori. I was celebrated in my time too, but I never sang so well as she, did I?'

At that moment Mrs. Dalzell perceived Leone; he had glided round the piano, and was close behind Irene, unseen by her. Her enthusiasm had changed into a smiling indifference as the crowd surrounded her with innumerable compliments. Leone bent slightly and whispered a word or two in her ear, and she lifted her eyes to his with a look that replied so fully, so eloquently, that Mrs. Dalzell involuntarily exclaimed, 'Ah! she will be content with love, instead of fame, after all!'

An ejaculation from Madame Marriotti reminded her how disagreeable to her friend she was making herself; but she forgot to apologize; for, just then, Irene passed through the crowd, which opened to make way for her, and paused to speak to two young girls, seated close to an elderly lady. One had before attracted Mrs. Dalzell's attention by her true Roman face, with its low brow, unabashed, brilliant eyes, and black wavy hair. While Irene sang, her countenance had grown dark as night; it seemed as if the triumphant hymn gave her actual pain; her expression was positively startling. The other girl seemed nearly of the same age, but she was darker, shyer, more child-like, with eyes like those of a fawn; and as Irene sang, they were lifted up, and seemed to laugh with delight.

Mrs. Dalzell asked who the two were. 'That one with black hair, rolled back, is the Contessina Gemma, Count Clementi's sister — you have heard of him? — a noble, turned radical; the little one is Imelda Olivetti, the *sposa* of young Ravelli, Nota's chief ally. Ah! there the child is,' as Irene approached, perceived Mrs. Dalzell, and, the words she had been about to ad-

dress to Madame Marriotti dying on her lips, she threw her arms about her friend's neck, with exclamations of delight, regardless of the crowd.

'Ah! I have given you both a surprise,' said Madame Marriotti; 'now, say all you have to say as fast as you can, for I shall want you to sing again presently; meanwhile, I suppose, Gemma Clementi can manage something. Contessina, let us have that air of Stradella's, or get your brother to sing "*Deh ti conforta*" with you; and be sure you put sentiment into it.'

She made the girl obey, after a resistance rather sullen than timid. That Madame Marriotti invited her to sing in her house was sufficient proof of her capacity; but Mrs. Dalzell and Irene behaved so ill as to talk with Leone, in a low voice, all through the song. Irene was overflowing with the doings of the morning; her own affairs were quite secondary, and she had to be allowed to exhaust the first subject before she would tell anything about her *début*, or that she had sung at several private parties, *chaperoned* by Madame Marriotti, and that she got sixteen *scudi* a night — quite a fortune, and it would be more another season.

'You were satisfied to-night, signora?' she asked, in playful certainty of the answer.

'You vain child! suppose I say no?'

'Oh, you will not say that, signora; I could not help being inspired to-night,' she said, with a glance at Leone.

'Ah, Signor Nota!' said Mrs. Dalzell, with a smile, 'I have been hearing of your misdeeds from Madame Marriotti.'

'She has been my worst enemy, but I can afford to forgive her now,' said Leone.

'She tells me many sad things,' said Irene; 'she says I am spoiled for an artist, and that I encourage Leone to set up Italy as my rival; but I shall always choose for Italy to come first; I am not afraid.'

'Italy is always to be first,' said Leone, smiling proudly; 'we are ready to make sacrifices when Italy asks for them.'

'And Vincenzo, what does he say to your setting up a rival to him, Irene?'

'Oh, signora!' exclaimed Irene, with a wounded look, and

she shrank away from Leone, so that Mrs. Dalzell repented her words; but he took Irene's hand, saying, 'There is no rivalry where there is one family; Vincenzo has taken me into his, and made me rich.'

'Rich, indeed!' said Irene, recovering her bright look; 'he is so proud, signora! he will have nothing to say till he has made a fortune, though he knows long betrothments are unheard of here.'

Mrs. Dalzell thought how this frank speaking, perfectly lady-like and refined though Irene was, differed from the bashfulness of an English girl in a like case; but she could not like it less; it suited the southern maiden, who had already several times that evening reminded her of Juliet.

As they were continuing to talk of Vincenzo, Gemma Clementi left the piano and presently came to Irene, whispering something to her. Irene rose, looked vexed, said to Mrs. Dalzell, 'I will soon return,' and followed her to a little room, where cloaks and hoods had been taken off. 'Well, Gemma, what is it? I want to go back.'

'Oh, you are to sing again, of course; at all events, it cannot be that hymn; it would drive me mad to hear it again. Every word made me feel as if you had stabbed me, and if Luigi had been there I would have stabbed you,' said Gemma, clenching her hand and knitting her brow. 'And to see that silly child, Imelda, full of delight! The world is not wide enough for us two; but, at least, Ravelli loves me, and only me, though they have chosen her to be his wife.'

'Did you only bring me here to say all this?'

'I hate the name of Italy — my only real rival! Oh, you asked me something? No, I brought you here to see Pietruchio. I am kinder to you than you are to me and Ravelli.'

She ran back into the other room, and in her place stood Clementi. He was an old friend now, and Irene said, without hesitation, 'I am so glad to see you before you go.'

'Before I go on a mission whose danger you well know. Irene, this may be a long adieu; once before you closed my lips when something escaped me of another love mingling with that for our country; will you do the same now? Ah! I understand; no need to speak.'

'Oh, Count Clementi! you gave up your prospects for a nobler love than mine!'

He looked at her fixedly, and said, 'When we last spoke of this, you said that, though you did not love me, you loved no one else?'

The words were a question, and her face replied plainly.

A thousand things were in the look that flashed across his face as he spoke the one word 'Leone?'

'Yes,' she answered. Both stood still; that moment had overthrown the schemes of three years; little stood, at that moment, between Nota and a stiletto, but, even in the few instants which passed while Irene stood mute beside him, Clementi's subtle brain had devised new schemes. When he spoke again, it was to say 'Farewell!'

'No, *au revoir!* You will return, you will bring success; these are days for nobler things than mere private hopes!' said Irene, earnestly.

'When I return, if return I do, it will be to find you Nota's bride?'

'No,' she answered, 'that cannot be yet, but — Count Clementi — I love him.'

She meant to crush all hope, and at least she stung him, so that he could barely disguise the look of hatred that crossed his face; but his voice did not betray him as he said, 'It is enough, the subject shall never be named again, and the future still belongs to me.'

'Oh yes, the future, our country's future! We have that best interest in common; we have shared all the past hopes and fears, and we shall have more good news when you return.'

'Yes, when I return. Till then, farewell, Irene!'

He held her hand for a moment and regarded her steadfastly; kissed it once, and disappeared, while she returned to Mrs. Dalzell with troubled thoughts. The first question was innocent and yet embarrassing enough. 'Was the handsome girl who called you away Count Clementi's sister?'

'Gemma Clementi — yes.'

'A great friend?'

'We are such near neighbors that I see her constantly now

that she has come home from the convent, but we are hardly friends.'

'But her brother is Vincenzo's special ally, after Signor Nota, of course.'

'Yes, he and Luigi Ravelli.'

'And who did I hear that that pretty child is, and the lady in black velvet, just what one would fancy Lady Capulet to have been? She ought to wear a flowing train and a hood.'

'That is Imelda Olivetti, a dear, dear child, and the lady is her mother.'

'Child! she is sixteen, and Ravelli's *promessa sposa*,' said Leone.

'I love her dearly,' said Irene; 'do let me introduce her to you.'

'Thank you; but my Italian has grown rather rusty: it strikes me that both it and your English would be the better for a little practice, signorina.'

'She is teaching me English,' said Leone, with pretended alarm; 'I hope she is capable of it?'

Irene shook her head saucily at the implied doubt, and in fact she spoke English very well, and her foreign accent was but piquant and pleasing.

Madame Marriotti came up again, and made them listen to a German pianist; afterwards she sent Irene to sing again, and sitting down by Mrs. Dalzell, told her who different people were, while from time to time old acquaintances came up to welcome the stranger and remained a few minutes to talk on the inexhaustible subject of the new Pope and his measures. Late in the evening an ecclesiastic entered, distinguished of course by his particular dress, but still more by his remarkable countenance, which forcibly recalled to Mrs. Dalzell's mind a picture she had somewhere seen of a Spanish saint — where, she could not remember, but this man might have been the original. A thin, ascetic face, the features so delicate that they would have been feminine had they been a whit less austere; deep-set eyes gleaming under a broad, pale forehead; with an indescribable look as if he were accustomed not only to read men, but to govern them. Such a face might have belonged to the founder or reformer of

some rigid order; but, stern and watchful as it was when at rest, it became singularly fascinating and persuasive, even seductive when he spoke; and as he entered, there was a movement and murmur among those present, which showed he was a person of eminence, and several immediately surrounded him, as if proud to claim his acquaintance. His spare figure seemed from its straightness to rise above those around him, and he remained for some minutes the centre of a group, answering, with calm, soft tones, the buzz of eager appeal. Mrs. Dalzell noticed that Irene kissed his hand as he paused near her, and that Leone was one of those standing round him; and turned to express her surprise to her hostess, but Madame Marriotti had hurried to welcome the new comer, and remained standing in deep conversation with him for some minutes. When she left him, he sat down near the piano, speaking occasionally to his neighbors, but generally listening to what went on around him, yet without seeming to do so; the words appeared to float to his ear, and an occasional remark showed that he heard and appreciated what was said on all sides in spite of the buzz of voices, in which the words 'The Pope,' 'Amnesty,' 'Cicceruacchio,' 'Gizzi,' 'Austrian policy,' seemed to cross and recross each other in all directions, with a freedom most significant that a new *régime* had begun. Madame Marriotti returned to Mrs. Dalzell, and whispered, 'Padre Rinaldi. I don't love priests in general, but I do believe that man is a saint, if there be such things now-a-days, and he has enormous influence here; the people absolutely worship him. His eloquence! you should hear him preach. I went once to St. Andrea della Valle, but the crowd nearly killed me — there was not room for a reed in the church. He has travelled everywhere and knows all languages, and I have heard wonderful things (I'm sure I do not know whether they are true or not; one can't believe half one hears, especially at Rome); but they do say, that the power he had amongst some tribe of savages whom he lived amongst for years, and converted, is something too extraordinary to be believed.'

'I could believe anything of that man,' said Mrs. Dalzell, looking at him with great interest. He raised his eyes and met hers at the moment, and she withdrew her glance hastily, lowering her

voice, as she said, 'There certainly is mesmerism in him; I feel sure he could obtain any power he pleased over me.'

'Mesmerism! it is strictly forbidden here; perhaps that means nobody but the priests are to possess it,' said Madame Marriotti, who certainly had no love for the Roman clergy. 'You must ask young Nota about him; he will have plenty to tell you; Padre Rinaldi is his oracle, and certainly a reforming priest is worth noting.'

There was a constant movement in the rooms, as well as incessant talking, and a little crowd soon interposed between Mrs. Dalzell and Padre Rinaldi; but she still seemed to feel his eye upon her, and even while laughing at herself, still declared that he possessed mesmeric power.

Count Clementi had disappeared an hour or two before, and when she asked where he was, no one seemed to know. Irene and Leone could both have explained, but the matter was a secret. He had asked for no pledge of silence from Irene respecting the declaration he had made, earnestly as he wished that Leone should not hear of it. He rightly judged that from her no one would ever know that he had sought to be more than a friend.

CHAPTER XI.

Well done, thou watcher on the lonely tower!
Is the day breaking? Dawns the happy hour?
We pine to see it: — tell us yet again,
If the broad daylight breaks upon the plain.

It breaks, it comes — the misty shadows fly,
A rosy radiance gleams upon the sky;
The mountain tops reflect it calm and clear,
The plain is yet in shade, but day is near.

MACKAY.

MRS. DALZELL was more successful in her second visit to Palazzo Clementi than she had been in her first. The servant girl again opened the door, but received her less wonderingly, and volunteered the information, '*La padrona sta a pettinarsi.*'

How many times before the same odd phrase had amused the English lodger until she learnt at last to comprehend that this "pectinating" process meant that Madama Cecchi was laying aside her morning *deshabille*, and preparing herself for the afternoon. She knew it would be vain to expect to see her for an hour at least, and went to the sitting-room of Irene and Vincenzo. Both were at home, and both started up joyfully to receive her, and her old favorite Tevere overwhelmed her with demonstrations of delight.

The sitting-room had become thoroughly Italian in her absence; the walls roughly, but very effectively painted with views of Tivoli, Albano, and the Campagna; no carpet on the uneven brick floor, except a narrow strip beside the sofa, and the furniture had a stiff, formal look; the centre of the room was occupied by a piano; a plaster bust of Pio Nono stood on a bracket with an embroidery frame below it, and the red sofa was adorned with a cushion, on which Madama Cecchi, in some extraordinary

fit of industry, had worked a bird of Paradise with a brilliant tail. Less Italian looked a small bookcase.

Vincenzo was writing in a thick manuscript book as she entered; he was in his indoors costume of dressing-gown and velvet cap, and he looked even thinner and more of an invalid than of old; his complexion had become that of one in confirmed ill health, and the crutches near his sofa showed that he found moving as difficult as ever, but his countenance was bright with joy at the arrival of Mrs. Dalzell. Irene's music and his carving for some time formed the topic of conversation; he had been very fortunate in obtaining employment; Signor Trajano had been very kind in recommending his works, and he was always busy. Mrs. Dalzell described again to him, what she had already told by letter, how good an effect some of his garlands of fruit and flowers had in an English mansion, where they had been placed, and described the paintings which they surrounded. When all this had been told, Irene called her attention to a carnation on a table.

'Yes, I have been admiring it; but how come you to admit scented flowers?'

Irene and Vincenzo smiled, and the former placed it before Mrs. Dalzell, who then discovered that though it was a *bonâ fide* carnation plant, the flowers were paper. The imitation was so good that she repeatedly touched them before she could believe they were artificial.

'They are feigned,' said Irene, unconsciously translating from the Italian in which she thought.

'Imelda Olivetti made them and sent them to me.'

'But these are not *finti;* these are my garden,' said Vincenzo, moving with difficulty to the window, which he opened; 'see, I have a stock, a camellia, and a rose-tree, and here is the canary which Leone was pleased to say he brought as a gift to me. See! Tevere cannot bear it — he is so jealous of it, that when I let it out, we are obliged to put him in the anteroom. Is he not a pretty fellow? white and yellow, the Papal colors! and do you see the plants — the goldfinch in the window of the top story opposite?'

'Your neighbor quite beats you in colors, Vincenzo; a red and blue cage!'

'My neighbor is an artisan, and we are great friends; we water our plants and feed our birds at the same hour every day; as the clock strikes, I always see his black beard and purple cap appear among them. I thought he must be a good fellow, he is so fond of them, and he has quite tamed a little yellow water-wag-tail, that is always running over the roof here; I suppose he passed the same judgment on me, for we always exchange nods, and look for each other. Irene and I made up our minds that we would give him a pleasure, and bought a rose-tree for him; he only possessed stocks and wall-flowers till then, and we sent it without saying whence it came; but somehow he found out, and came to thank us.'

'Such a scene of gratitude!' said Irene; 'and he has vowed to do service whenever and wherever he can.'

'Just the same number of people looking out of window as ever!' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'It is our way of taking the air,' said Vincenzo; 'I find it very refreshing.'

They sat down again, and Irene continued, 'I showed you the carnation, signora, because I want to talk to you about Imelda. It is a secret, but you stand so apart from it all that it is like telling a confessor; and I want advice, for Vincenzo and I are both puzzled. You heard that she was Luigi Ravelli's *promessa sposa;* he is an engineer now, but he was brought up in Signor Olivetti's studio.'

'His studio — he is a painter or a sculptor, then?'

'Oh no,' said Irene, perplexed.

Vincenzo saw the difficulty, and added, 'Perhaps in English the word is used differently; it only means here a place to study in. Signor Olivetti is a lawyer.'

'I understand, and Signor Ravelli was his pupil.'

'So,' pursued Irene, 'Imelda has known him all her life; the two families settled, almost as soon as she was born, that their son and daughter should marry. Luigi never liked the law, and he has persuaded his father to let him be an engineer (you know we are to have railroads now), and not marry just yet. I am afraid the real reason is, that he and Gemma Clementi love each other. She came home from Sta. Caterina di Siena last summer,

and was to have married some old *marchese*, but he died. I wish she had! I don't know how it began, but they meet and write continually, and no one knows but ourselves.'

'Not here!' exclaimed Mrs. Dalzell.

'No, no; we could not allow that, though Ravelli is a great friend of ours.'

'And Irene positively refused to give him Gemma's letters,' added Vincenzo; 'consequently they have respected her ever since.'

'How can all this be if Italian girls are so jealously watched?'

'Perhaps it sharpens their wits for deceit, signora; and besides, Contessa Clementi is an invalid, and trusts to her maid and the sister-in-law who lives with her, and who takes very indifferent care of Gemma, I suspect; indeed, Leone privately begged me not to let Irene go out anywhere with her, long before the signorina knew he had any right to interfere.'

'Gemma has insisted on being friends with us, but I do not like her — I could not like any one who perilled dear Imelda's happiness,' said Irene.

'Is this family compact a very serious thing?' asked Mrs. Dalzell. 'Surely the simple thing to do is for Signor Luigi to tell his father the truth.'

'It would be in vain,' said Vincenzo; 'Signor Ravelli is quite despotic — a hot-headed, kind, tyrannical old man, never opposed by any one in his own family; he would only think Luigi a foolish boy and not listen. He cannot understand that his son can be grown up. Besides, the Clementi would never consent, though they are *decadente;* Ravelli is not even a count in the provinces.'

'Do the Olivetti family know how they are risking their daughter's happiness?'

'They would not believe it. They would think this a silly affair which the marriage would end, and Imelda has been taught from childhood to consider Luigi as her future husband. She is such a child that she does not see that he only likes her as a sister.'

'Oh, signora, don't you think Luigi must find out how much better a wife she would make him than Gemma, who is so intensely selfish?'

'Who cannot endure to see him pat Tevere here; she would poison anything he loved, she is so jealous and violent; and he is as blind as a bat to it, or taking it all for love!' said Vincenzo.

'She even dislikes to hear Italy spoken of, because she thinks he cares too much about it,' said Irene; 'but she knows better than to let him see that.'

'And Imelda cares for Italy just because he does — neither of them have a spark of real patriotism, but I can forgive her. The thing that puzzles me is, why Clementi, who sees everything, lets this go on. Perhaps he might, after all, let her marry a commoner. He has come with her several times when Luigi was here, and yet seemed to notice nothing. I cannot make it out.'

'Yet you like him?'

'Indeed I do, he has made noble sacrifices — he goes too far, I own, but of course he must be spurred by the fear that men may suspect him of a leaning to his old party.'

'And Cecchi?'

Vincenzo shook his head. 'Cecchi is becoming a fanatic, quiet as he seems; once set him off, and you have a regular Jacobin. I don't like his principles; he is mad about equality, and republics, and socialism, and such stuff. Our best men see that what we really want is a constitutional government, such as we shall have if people will but wait; Rome was not built in a day, nor will it be reformed in one; but Cecchi and his party call us moderates Pope's men; they are absorbed at present in one great body of liberals, but I am afraid they will split with it soon. Such as Cecchi would stick at nothing to compass their ends, and yet you know how mild and amiable the man is in private life. I only hope the Government will hold them well in, for they would make small account of men's lives if they stood in their way. There have been many assassinations of late years.'

'Not in Rome?'

'No, in the provinces; but if a man stabs another, to this day they say in the Trastevere, "*Poor* fellow! he has murdered such a one," and all agree to hide him.'

'Because they think he must be brave,' said Irene.

'There! you see she understands the feeling. As if there could be bravery in a cowardly sudden blow with the stiletto! Fair fight, face to face, I can admire; but you see, those who justify assassination say it is the only means to get justice where fear and bribery rule everything.'

'Their reign is over now! These three last have been wonderful years,' said Irene, triumphantly.

'Yes, so Vincenzo's letters showed me.'

'My letters! If I had told you half what I might! You little guessed how much more there was to tell — what risks we were all running! You must know that Leone was the very soul of what Government would have called a plot, what I call a propaganda; though perhaps the reverend fathers here, Loyola's disciples, might object to that use of the word,' said Vincenzo, maliciously. 'The object was to spread liberal opinions, and give men some definite idea what to aim at, reform and freedom for Italy, but no driving away of kings and attempts at impossible republics. The thing was to get this into people's heads, but the very mention of such ideas was as much as one's life was worth. We all knew we risked life and liberty. There were Nota, Cecchi, Ravelli, and Donati at first, who planned and organized the measures to be taken, then myself. We wrote, and got our papers printed in England, or circulated them in MS. Irene can tell you who copied many of them; it was in fact a kind of secret society, and in these three years our progress has been worth all the danger — we are counted by hundreds all over the Papal States; but it was perilous work. You can't be sure among numbers that some won't boast or betray; we were standing on a mine with a lighted match in it.'

'Leone might well say that, if I realized his position, I should not promise him Irene,' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'was this your care of her, Vincenzo?'

'Signora,' he answered seriously, 'there are things more precious than even life or liberty; we are Italians, and she is Nota's promised wife. This was no play; it was life and death in thorough earnest. We had to distrust the very air we breathed.

The danger, from the over-zealous, like Cecchi, was as great as it was from traitors. Over and over again Leone's room was searched; more than once, I am convinced, a spy came here under pretext of buying my carvings. I assure you there were days when every ring at the bell was as startling as if the police must be outside.'

Irene leant her head on her hand and sighed. She knew more about a conspiracy now than in the days of the *Pastorale*.

'I can hardly fancy such boys organizing a serious plot!' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'Nota himself not seven-and-twenty — there was Cecchi, to be sure.'

'It is only the young who have hope or courage enough to shape the future,' said Vincenzo; 'besides, Leone has a wonderful power of inspiring other people with his own brave, ardent spirit. Twice it seemed all over with us — the first time just before I knew anything about it, when poor Donati was arrested, and copies of papers and some of Leone's poems were found on him; but he kept the secret well. Poor fellow! we thought the amnesty would have given him back to us, but he has never been heard of. Again, in '46, the police had certainly got information, but Pope Gregory died, and all proceedings were stopped; for the city was like a seething cauldron, and Government was afraid of exciting the people. And since that we have been able to stand forth in daylight, thank Heaven; no one is persecuted for being a liberal now, and Rome is proud of her poet and *improvvisatore*.'

'Yes,' said Irene; 'but still you tell the signora all this in confidence, Vincenzo.'

'I do — there is no need to say much about it. Still, now that I look back, it seems marvellous all went well — such hair-breadth 'scapes! We never could have got our papers from England, if one of our associates had not belonged to the Custom-house, and another traded from Marseilles to Ostia. Our chief opponent was Madama Cecchi — we were obliged to let her into the secret, and she and Cecchi had suffered so much from his meddling with conspiracy before, that no wonder she dreaded it; but she came into it at last.'

'It appears to me, that the women are the chief sufferers, after all, Vincenzo.'

'They are proud to accept that part, since they cannot take a more active one, signora,' said Irene, raising her head and smiling.

'Did Clementi know of all this?'

'Not till quite the end of Pope Gregory's days. Naturally our friends had not the same confidence in him as we have; his being Monsignore Clementi's nephew was of course very much against him, but all know what he really is now.'

There was a pause, Mrs. Dalzell confounded by what she heard, and Vincenzo mentally reviewing those days of danger, anxiety, hope, and triumph. Irene broke it by saying, 'We have gone a long way from Imelda. What do you say about that, signora?'

'Well, my dear child, I don't know what to say. I don't see that you can do anything, but it is a disagreeable position for you to be in. Do you see much of these girls?'

'Gemma is always slipping in, and she has made friends with Imelda; I cannot think why, for I know she hates her.'

'Cannot you guess? I can, though Leone says I am a thorough Englishman, slow and sure. These Italians are so conceited, signora,' said Vincenzo, looking playfully at his sister; 'they think no one knows anything but themselves. Why, don't you see, she meets Ravelli at Casa Olivetti?'

'Oh, Vincenzino! that would be too treacherous!'

'Much she thinks of that! Ravelli angers me most; he is the most honorable fellow in everything else, but the fact is he laughs at the family compact.'

'*Zitto!* there is Gemma herself,' said Irene, as a rapid knock came at the door, and Gemma entered. She certainly looked very handsome, even in the untidy morning costume which displeased Mrs. Dalzell's English eye. She looked startled at finding a visitor, but replied readily in French when Mrs. Dalzell addressed her, and explained that she had come to practise some music with Irene, which was to be sung next day at the Amateur Philharmonic Society; and she showed that she knew how to make herself agreeable, by her polite remarks to Mrs. Dalzell

on Irene's singing and acting. Her own was quite as good — at least the latter, Vincenzo muttered in English. She looked at him with a rapid penetrating glance, like her brother's, as if she divined what he said; and then, standing by the piano while Irene opened her music, whispered, 'Pietrucchio is gone; he bade me tell you to give this to Ravelli yourself.' Irene saw the direction was in the count's handwriting, and she had no choice but to accept the commission. They had scarcely begun to sing, when a knock came at the door again, and a lady's maid signed to Gemma to come out, and they heard the words, 'The signora contessa wants you; I heard your aunt say you were with your embroidery mistress in her room, but you had better come in directly.'

Gemma returned, and said she was obliged to go, and she disappeared with the *cameriera*.

'There!' said Vincenzo, emphatically. 'What has she given you, Irene? I dare say she has slipped in a note! What do you think of her, signora? a handsome, false face, is it not?'

They were again interrupted; this time by the appearance of Madama Cecchi, enthusiastically delighted to see Mrs. Dalzell, who further delighted her by producing an English gift for her — a case of Sheffield scissors. The padrona made a sweeping and stately reverence, and received them as though they were made of diamonds. On hearing that Mrs. Dalzell was coming to lodge with her again, she said she had fully hoped and expected it; she believed no tenant had ever left her without its being a day of mourning on both sides; she had suffered so much in parting from them, that she had resolved never to let herself feel affection for them again.

'You forget the Russian general,' said the malicious Vincenzo.

'Ah, Heaven! the Russian general! what a man! what a man! Impossible to please him — what I suffered at that time none know, but I and Heaven! Only an educated person can suffer so,' said she, clasping her hands on her heart. 'Always dissatisfied, always calling for his man, or Nino, or me — never quiet one moment; a voice like thunder, a step like Atlas! Enough! He returned last winter — he never knew what he made me undergo; I was robust, I had a fine figure before he

came, but I grew lean, a sight to horrify! My friends used to say, "But what is it? what is the matter with you?" and I, "Nothing, nothing at all;" for I have a certain spirit, I never complain. As I said, he returned last year, and, like all my lodgers, remembered me, and brought me a beautiful present, which I will show you, and he asked if I had lodgings to let again. I had an apartment vacant, but I told him it was let for the season — he enters my house no more. Imagine, dear signora, on the coldest nights he would spend hours in pacing the corridors, and saying he was too hot; while he admitted the night air through the whole house by leaving the door wide open — a draught as dangerous as a stroke from a dagger! Ah, what a man!'

'And then he quarrelled with a Polish family who happened to live at a corner of this floor,' said Vincenzo, 'and sent them word that they must leave the palace or he must.'

'How did it end?'

'Oh, both stayed, but they were natural enemies, always at war.'

'What have become of Filomena and Agata, signora? I see you have new servants.'

The laughing glance exchanged between brother and sister showed that this, too, was a sore subject with the padrona.

'Agata is married,' said she, 'well married to a baker in the Babuino, whence I get all my bread; but as for that other — ah, signora! what misery servants are! in every house in Rome is tribulation on account of them. You recollect how good that girl was? We used to call her Saint Filomena, on account of the purity of her manners. Honest,' continued the padrona, counting on her fingers, 'that is one. Agile, two. Of a good heart, three. Enough. She met with a lover, a *birbante*, an idle fellow, who turned her head. I preached to her in vain. I said, "This cannot continue; marry at once, or give him up."'

'I shall report this advice to Leone,' said Vincenzo, thereby winning the padrona's hearty laugh, but, nevertheless, she continued to detail her troubles. 'In vain, absolutely in vain. Did she go to the door — there he was. Did I send her on an errand; he was leaning on the chains in the piazza, and she took

three hours to perform what should have taken as many minutes. At last I said she was the scandal of the palace, and must leave me in a month. She went that day, and sent her sister to say she should come back no more. But what a girl!'

'The end of it was that she displeased the *birbante* by *civetteria*,' said Vincenzo.

'How?'

'Coquetry; did you never see two little *civette* coquetting together?' said Irene, putting her head on one side, and looking exactly like a *civetta* owl, while Madama Cecchi completed the portrait by mimicking its petulant cry.

'And he declared that he would poniard her, and then himself, and end his days on a scaffold,' continued Vincenzo; 'I don't know how he meant to do all three, but he contented himself with giving her a good beating.'

'You have not as pretty a maid now, signora,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'No, ugly, very ugly, but swift — she runs like the wind; she is a little demon. The other is pretty, Menica. You have not seen her yet. She is discreet too, a nun in her conduct.'

'I shall beg to have the pretty one to wait on me. Now, signora, can we settle about my rooms, or must we wait for Signor Cecchi?'

'Cecchi!' began the padrona, in a tone of profound contempt at the idea of his interfering with her domestic arrangements; but instantly subsiding into politeness, 'it will be a happiness for him to have the signora as his tenant again. How often have we spoken of you, and I have said, "Do not fear, Nino; she will return, she will honor us again with her presence." That is his way. The signora will see when he hears she is in Rome, what joy — Nino! Ni!'

'*Che c'é?* What is it?' asked the pleasant voice of her husband, as he advanced into the room. 'Ah, what is this! the English signora! I am too happy to see her returned to us. How is it I did not hear of it?'

'I came in too late to tell you last night, and you were gone out before I was up this morning,' said Irene.

'The signora has come to ask if we have an apartment for her, Ni.'

'*Per Bacco!*' exclaimed Cecchi in utter consternation, 'I have just met with a Prussian baron and promised it to him! How could I guess you would have let in my absence?'

'See, signora,' said the padrona, without even a reproachful look at her husband, 'I should have been charmed to have you here again; you would have been welcome as rain in August; it pierces my heart to lose you, but you hear! Husbands are ever the masters — what can I do?'

'But I say, I should have been grateful — too happy to have the signora here!' exclaimed Nino, driven to despair by this speech; 'what can I say? what can I do? I will go to the baron, I will tell him how it is; he is a man of honor, a gentleman, he will understand — excuse, signora,' and he rushed out breathless.

'Let us go to your apartment, signora,' said the padrona, composedly, as if nothing had occurred; 'there may be some improvement we could have the pleasure of making for you.'

She led the way, Mrs. Dalzell followed, struggling not to smile, and Irene and Vincenzo fairly gave way to the laughter they had hardly suppressed for the last five minutes.

CHAPTER XII.

With a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep
Fantastically tangled; the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems colored by its skies.
Childe Harold.

THE theatres had just re-opened, and Irene, besides still continuing to study regularly with Madame Marriotti, was much occupied by rehearsals and performances. She was a very conscientious cantatrice, studying all her parts, great and small, with equal care, and giving in consequence to each a peculiar cast of her own, so that the public sometimes hardly knew whether to approve of her deviations from established traditions; but she was beginning to be well known as a cantatrice of great promise and of an excellent school, and was already becoming the favorite singer at the theatre where she was engaged, though she had Madame St. Simon, a beauty and a celebrity, to eclipse her.

Irene was entirely devoted to her profession; she had set an ideal standard of perfection before her, and did not need to be told that she had not yet reached it. Indeed, she was sometimes amusingly indignant that the public were so easily satisfied, and was out of all patience when she discovered how far most of her companions made a very little pains go. Her theatrical life had two sides — one noble and animating, the other so bitter and

depressing that at times she was almost disgusted with her art itself. The *tracasseries* of the theatre, the character of many of her associates, the spite, envy, and malice which seemed to influence everything, great or small, these were absolutely revolting to the young cantatrice, whose own life had been so singularly guarded. Some of those, amongst whom she was thrown, had characters as unblemished as her own, and amongst these she counted not a few friends; but there were others who heartily disliked her, and threw every imaginable obstacle in her way. Madame St. Simon pretended to look loftily down on her young rival, declared their styles did not correspond, and never appeared on nights when Irene did; and infinite were the scenes of rebellion and confusion caused by her among the *corps dramatique*, which the manager had to soothe, threaten, and force into tranquillity, favoring the rivals alternately, both being too important to be sacrificed, and the one being as high-spirited as the other was unreasonable, and all the other performers siding vehemently with one or the other. Irene now knew why Mrs. Dalzell had shrunk from such a life for her, but usually she considered her profession as apart from all these vexations, loved it thoroughly, and dauntless and hopeful, rose lightly above vexations and difficulties; or at worst was only dispirited till she had talked them over with Vincenzo.

Illness brings out the feminine side of a man's character, and this was probably the explanation of Vincenzo's peculiar feelings towards his sister. Irene's hopes, Irene's future, were his own. Whatever concerned her touched him; on her was centred a devoted unselfish love, which was beyond price. Another might love her more passionately, but none could do so better than Vincenzo. Their parts had been reversed in life — the sister took the active share; the brother regarded her with a woman's devotion. He had felt only happiness in her engagement to Leone; which would give her a protector and secure her happiness. Vincenzo's feeling on this subject never varied. Irene was ever his chief thought; he knew all about her companions, her difficulties at the theatre, as well as she did herself. Every one of her parts was studied with him; he was the most patient of critics, and as there were sometimes between them the dif-

fering opinions and free discussion that elicit truth, she owed not a little to his observations.

Irene had been a good sister. Her temper might be high and impatient with others, but with him never. In the early days of his illness his despondent moods were always met by her with the gentlest patience; she was never too busy or too anxious to idle away as much time beside his sofa as he liked; she never let her own affairs engross her or trouble him when he was unfit for them. Those who only saw her outside Vincenzo's room could never have guessed how tender and patient the mirthful high-spirited girl could be; in truth, her buoyant temperament was a great blessing both to her and to Vincenzo, who needed a gayer spirit to make sunshine for him — he enjoyed it as a chilly invalid does a summer's day. None, however, could now call him despondent or irritable. Mrs. Dalzell saw that he had found out the solution of the problem that had harassed him; he was in truth contented with his lot, but neither she nor Irene guessed how sharp had been the contests he had fought and won between those four walls where his life seemed destined to be passed. He need hardly have wished Irene to have any protector but himself; though their natural position in life had been exchanged, she thoroughly trusted his judgment and put entire confidence in him, and her affection for him was so great that it was wonderful how Leone contrived to steal any of it away. Perhaps, however, the best proof of how much he had obtained was her fear lest Vincenzo should fancy he was less to her in any way than before. But hers was a generous young heart, quite capable of containing brother and lover and her art besides; it knew nothing of that kind of selfish absorption into one person which sometimes seems to make the family of a bride nothing to her in comparison with the new love. Leone could not have been Leone had he grudged to share her with Vincenzo, his tried friend, with whom had been divided all the perils of the past eventful years. They had risked their lives, hand in hand, as it were, for the same great object, the object which had been Leone's boyish dream and the aim of his manhood, the independence of Italy. With years his course of thought had advanced, deepened, widened, but never varied. The dream of a

strong mind becomes a purpose, an action — and life had not smiled so softly on him as to lull him into forgetfulness. He lived with the knowledge that, sooner or later, for this cherished hope he must suffer, and he had not breathed a word that could link Irene's fate to his own till the dangerous time had passed and the new reign changed all things.

Leone might be looked on as the leader of a large party, who demanded first the freedom of Italy, then gradual reform, and stood between the Republicans and the Gregoriani, as those were called who had made fortunes under the old reign, detested each change as if it had been a new heresy, and were under Austrian influence. These and the ultra-liberals unconsciously worked together, and spread discontent even among the perpetual feasts and processions which now had become almost a necessity to the Romans, whose southern nature, and the training of nearly two thousand years, made triumphs and demonstrations and excitement meat and drink to them. The same nature disposed them to plots, lotteries, and games of chance; they had grown accustomed to conspiracy under preceding Popes, and all the horrible executions, fines, and imprisonments only smothered the flame in one place to make it break out more widely in another, and induced a cowardly ferocity, instead of the brave, firm spirit which alone ennobles a people. Already, there were evil symptoms; the temporizing, cautious reforms aroused suspicion, the bad harvests excited discontent, though Pio Nono's charity at the time of distress spread his personal popularity, if possible, wider than ever. The Gregoriani fanned the discontent for one end; the ultra-liberals for another; pamphlets and papers, advocating violent measures, began to be widely circulated, printed either secretly or under the kind of demi-freedom granted to the press; and there were tumults in the provinces, and the general hatred for the priests, especially for the Jesuits, began to show itself. Already the cry had been heard in the streets, 'Death to the Neri! Long live the Bianchi!' old names which began to be applied to the Priests and the Liberals; there was an electric thrill abroad, but Pio Nono was still in the height of his popularity; still the crowds flocked to the Quirinal to receive his blessing from the balcony; still, when he

visited the provinces, he was received with indescribable enthusiasm; the families to whom the amnesty had given back beloved relations blessed him, and a new and sincere spirit of devotion prevailed at Rome. The people had been so much oppressed under preceding reigns that every improvement, however small, was received as if it came straight from heaven; how much more such an unexpected and extensive reformation as that which began with the rule of Pio Nono?

Public events touched Irene and Vincenzo only as they did every Roman of every class. All took a lively interest in them, and parties ran high; but as yet no hearth or home was troubled by the course they took. Leone had an active share in them, and daily brought reports of all that was passing, but both he and Irene had a livelihood to win, and were fully occupied. There was a prospect of their marriage. If Leone could rise to a higher post in the Dateria his salary would justify him in taking a wife; he had not hitherto been able to afford such a luxury, and all the money he and his friends could muster had been spent in printing and circulating their writings.

Mrs. Dalzell, who thought that Irene gave herself too little relaxation, made her come out with her whenever a vigil closed the theatres, and gave at once a holiday to the actors and time for serious thought to the public. One afternoon she proposed to visit the Corsini Gardens, where, as it chanced, she had never been. She had been interested by what she heard of Imelda Olivetti, and proposed to Irene to take her with them. Irene was uncertain, she doubted whether Signora Olivetti would consent. She did not believe any one but an Englishwoman would have proposed such a thing; a Roman would have been afraid of the responsibility.

'My dear, what responsibility?'

'Oh, a girl might make some acquaintance, or get into mischief. I know the padrona would say, 'If such a one asked me to take her daughter *a far due passi*, I would; but for proposing it myself — *giusto!*'

'I wonder if all Italians are as good mimics as you and the padrona,' said Mrs. Dalzell, laughing; 'you all act by nature, I believe.'

'Yes, when I see the English, I perceive that they keep their hands still, they do not raise their voices. I could not say two words in that wooden way; and even Vincenzo, though he is so English, has fingers that speak like ours, instead of being silent like yours. As for acting, you know girls are taught to recite, just as they are to work.'

'To work, my dear! Menica has just told me she cannot mend this hole in my skirt.'

'Oh, she is poor. Mistresses do not like a girl to work; they say, if she works well, she sits idle like a lady, and does nothing else. But girls in the upper classes have a mistress to teach them — Imelda has one, and Gemma too; you know she brought in her frame yesterday.'

'That is another peculiarity of yours. You do plain work with a cushion, and what you call *Broderie Anglaise* in a frame, but in England embroidery has long been out of fashion — I dare say we shall have it back some day.'

'Do you know that we express very good plain work by saying "It is sewn like an Englishwoman's work." Imelda made teaching me to embroider an excuse for our meetings, and I taught her English, and Signora Olivetti liked that, or I hardly suppose she would have let us be intimate, for I am a Protestant, and — though that is not so bad — an actress,' said Irene, raising her graceful head with smiling pride. 'But the Olivetti have rather taken the liberal side; they pique themselves on enlightened opinions. They were once in England, and the signora talks about English education, and has kept Imelda at home, and given her a very good one; she has learnt French, and work, and geography, and history, and music.'

'I thought you all learnt music?'

'Oh, not thoroughly; that is an English mistake. But there are very good voices and correct ears among the Romans. You ought to go to the Philharmonic. Signora Olivetti has never let Imelda be out of her sight; they go very little into society, but she is rather a friend of Madame Marriotti's, and that is how they came to be there. The other night, Gemma went with them, she has such a good voice that Madame Marriotti is glad to have her; though, if you asked her,' said Irene, putting on

precisely the little fairy's expression, 'she would say, "Oh; I can't bear the girl, and I know she hates me; but then, in a way I like any one who sings as she does." So now we will see if Signora Olivetti's liberality extends to letting us have Imelda, but I shall wonder very much if she says yes.'

Signora Olivetti, however, graciously consented, perhaps prepossessed by Mrs. Dalzell's appearance; and the pretty Imelda joined them, blushing and trembling with shyness and delight at so unusual an expedition.

Mrs. Dalzell found her Italian more available than Imelda's English, as she did not mind making mistakes, and Imelda did, and after every phrase looked at Irene, to see if it were correct.

They took their way towards Ponte Sisto, Mrs. Dalzell observing 'I said the carriage should come for us, but it will be pleasanter to walk there.'

Imelda said '*si signora*,' and no more, till presently she whispered, 'Are we not walking very fast?'

'Not for English people,' said Irene. 'Are you afraid that some one should see you? The other day, Madama Cecchi spoke to me seriously about the pace at which I walk, and said it was really shocking, and yet here is Mrs. Dalzell hardly able to go slow enough for us.'

'Ah!' said Imelda, with a sudden flush of bright pleasure, as, raising her little hand in the air, she fluttered her fingers in greeting to some one in a carriage full of gentlemen. One of them lifted his hat as they drove by, and Irene said, 'Ah, Luigi Ravelli.'

It sent a pang to Mrs. Dalzell's kind heart to see how that momentary meeting had lighted up the young girl's sweet, child-like face; fate had surely dealt hardly with her in linking one so affectionate and inexperienced to a man who deemed marriage with her as almost the worst evil that could befall him.

'You have known Signor Ravelli all your life?' she asked.

'Always. He was the same age as a brother of mine who died. Carlo was very fond of him, and while they were both in education, they, and others, used constantly to go with their *Pedante* to play in a large garden, which we have, some way from our house, and then they were together in papa's studio.'

'I am afraid I don't know what a *Pedante* means.'

Imelda looked as much abashed as if the want of comprehension had been hers, and Irene came to her aid.

'You know people don't like their sons to go to and from school alone, or to walk by themselves, so they have some one, who is called a *Pedante*, who takes charge of several boys, and walks out with them on Sundays and *festas*.'

'How long are boys kept under this surveillance?'

'Till thirteen or fourteen.'

Mrs. Dalzell thought of English schoolboys.

'And you used to meet in the garden, signorina?' she continued.

'Oh no,' said Imelda, scandalized. 'I used to go there with mamma at other times — never when the boys were there. Oh, Irene, do you hear?'

A door was open, and a mother was lulling her child to rest with Leone's hymn. They had reached the bridge, and stopped to look at the view, perhaps the most beautiful of all those seen from the Roman bridges. Looking towards the hills, the Tiber was spanned by Ponte Rotto, under which the old black mills were turning ceaselessly, almost level with the tawny water; the sunshine fell full on the ruins of the Palatine, about the base of which had gathered a crowd of modern buildings; a brick Campanile, of the middle ages, rose high above them against the blue sky, which was seen through its open arches; beyond, were the Latin Hills; on the other hand, St. Peter's stood pre-eminent in the distance; nearer, a stack of picturesque old houses were half-hidden by orange trees, where golden fruit clustered thickly; women leant from the windows, long lines of flapping clothes hung out to dry; below the ferry boat was crossing the river, impelled by the current — modern and ancient Rome all mingled together — everywhere were thrilling names connected with all that was most glorious in the past. The moderns are richer than their ancestors, the past is theirs as well as the present!

Mrs. Dalzell thought of the past; Irene, as she listened to the young mother's singing, thought of the future. They were aroused at last by perceiving that a respectable middle-aged man was regarding them with extreme perplexity; he looked up the

river towards the Palatine, down to Monte Mario — still he could see nothing that explained the pause and interest of the ladies, and after another steadfast look at them and at the river, he gave an audible grunt of dissatisfied marvel, and walked on. They moved too, Mrs. Dalzell saying, 'A worthy man, not given to poetry. What part do such as he take in politics?'

Irene looked back for him. 'An artisan, tolerably well off, discontented with things as they are, but not ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of improving them. There is little patriotism in such as he.'

'Do you know him?' asked Imelda, wondering.

'Not in the least, but I know how his class feel.'

'I wish I were as old and as clever as you. Signor Nota tells you about these things,' said Imelda, with a sigh, in which there was no envy, but a consciousness that Ravelli did not think her worthy of discussing politics with him. 'I remember I have heard papa and Signor Ravelli talk of — What *can* that be?'

They stopped in great alarm at the frightful shrieks which burst from a house in the bye street where they now were. A few people were gathered about the door, where a hired carriage was waiting; there was compassion on their faces, and Irene learned that a child had been killed by an accident, and that now it was to be carried away to the church, but the mother would not believe it was dead, nor allow it to be touched. The hysterical screams were appalling. Imelda shrank close to Mrs. Dalzell, but Irene exclaimed, 'I will be back directly,' and went into the house.

No effect ensued, the crowd thickened, then a murmur was heard among those on the outside, and all turned eagerly to a priest who walked straight through them, and disappeared into the house. Mrs. Dalzell had instantly recognised him, and the manner in which the people repeated his name told how well it was known. Gradual silence followed his presence in the house of mourning; next several men came out bearing a bier covered with a pall on which was a silver cross, and a few women followed, holding lighted candles; the little corpse was placed in the carriage, all the men present took off their hats in solemn homage to the presence of death, probably the first token of

respect the pauper child had ever received. It was a touching sight, though there was no ceremony, no brown-robed friars with waxen tapers and chanted psalms; the carriage drove away, the crowd dispersed, except a few who lingered to catch another glimpse of Padre Rinaldi. The silence that had succeeded the passionate grief struck cold on the heart. Mrs. Dalzell breathed more freely when Irene re-appeared, pale indeed but composed. Evidently no new misfortune had occurred.

'Irene! how could you go in?' exclaimed Imelda, hurrying her on.

'I could not help it. One could not pass by without trying to do something, but it was useless. There was a frightful scene till Padre Rinaldi came — the poor mother tore her hair, and shrieked like one possessed, and when she saw him she threw herself at his feet, entreating that her boy might not be taken away and thrown into a pit like a dog. But he quieted her instantly, I cannot tell how; and very soon she let them take the body. He is there still, but she was quite meek and patient even before I came away, though she was really like a wild beast before he entered.'

'How could you go in? I should have been so much afraid,' repeated Imelda.

'One must try to do something when people want help,' said Irene; 'don't talk of it any more, I want to think of something else.'

'Here is the Corsini Palace,' said Imelda, obedient as a child; 'are we to go into the Cortile?'

'Is this as new to you as to me?' asked Mrs. Dalzell; 'are you as ignorant of Rome as Irene used to be?'

'I know the churches, signora. We often go into one when we go out.'

'She knows nothing about Rome, Mrs. Dalzell,' said Irene. 'You must learn to understand there are two Romes, I don't mean Pagan and Christian, but one for foreigners and one for natives, and they don't mix.'

'Mamma has been in England,' said Imelda, for the first time venturing directly to address Mrs. Dalzell; 'she liked it much.

She has told me about it. You have seen the tunnel under the Thames?'

Mrs. Dalzell was obliged to confess that she had not, and Imelda thought this quite as extraordinary as did the English lady the little Italian's ignorance of Rome.

'There is one thing besides that I should very much like to see,' she added, 'a Quaker. Mamma has a picture of a male and a female Quaker; they have brown dresses and a curious hat and cap. Do they belong to some confraternity?'

Mrs. Dalzell found the Society of Friends so difficult a subject that she wished William Penn would arise and speak for himself; but her attempts at explanation were cut short by the appearance of a magnificent porter in cocked hat and grand livery, who conducted them across the quadrangle, unlocked the ponderous iron gates of the gardens, and let the visitors through, leaving them to their own devices, and closing and locking the gates with a clash. They now stood in a wide avenue of ilex, whose gloomy boughs, interlacing overhead, effectually excluded the sunlight; nearly a quarter of a mile farther on, the ilexes were replaced by box and bay trees, beneath which sun and shade divided the path between them, trembling and flickering on the ground and invading each other's dominions with every breath of wind. The ladies heard the plash of fountains as they walked onwards by banks precipitous as a hill side, and covered with wild rank herbage and tall trees. Mrs. Dalzell stooped to gather a flower, and almost started, as looking up, she saw, rising against a sky fabulously blue, the unfamiliar grey ilex and dark cypress spire. She said it was so delightful to be in Rome again, that she marvelled afresh whenever she thus realized that she was actually there. Irene told her that in spring tide, the grass-plats were perfectly clouded with violets, and asked Imelda if she recollected gathering some in a particularly pleasant expedition to the Villa Borghese.

'Do you make an exception in favor of violet scent, signorina?' inquired Mrs. Dalzell.

'They are not *so* disagreeable,' replied the little Roman.

Some discussion followed, concerning the love and language of flowers at Venice, perhaps brought there from the East, and

Irene expressed her great wish to visit the Queen of the Adriatic. Imelda had never travelled further from home than Albano, and wondered if she ever should ; Mrs. Dalzell suggested a wedding tour.

'Oh, but,' said Imelda, 'I am sure Signor Ravelli would not let Luigi go far away. Perhaps he might allow him to go as far as L'Arriccia, and then we should come back and live with Signor and Signora Ravelli. Luigi has always wanted to travel; he would like to have gone far away, as Count Clementi has done, but they say he is too young.'

Mrs. Dalzell knew him to be at least three-and-twenty, and as high spirited and manly a youth as any in Rome. She smiled, and asked if he were not busy in his profession, and whether the count had none.

'Oh no, he is noble,' said Imelda.

'Yes, that really is a reason,' said Irene, rather to Mrs. Dalzell than to Imelda; 'you cannot expect our nobles to put their sons into professions, when the highest offices are closed against all but ecclesiastics.'

'Oh, a noble cannot have an *impiego*,' said Imelda. 'Has the signora seen Gemma Clementi? She always says that, when she marries, she must see Paris and London, and that she will not live with a mother-in-law. She is so strange! Mamma says she must have been brought up badly, for she would not marry the husband whom her uncle chose for her! She saw him at Sta. Caterina, where he came one day with her mother, and guessed immediately that he was to be her *sposo;* but she did not object then, because she was so desirous to leave the convent.'

'Do girls generally dislike the convent?'

'No,' said Irene, 'many are very fond of the nuns, and when they first come out they all say they shall return and take the veil; but Gemma was always in trouble. Do you know what the usual punishment is for a naughty girl? While the others are dining, she has to knell at the time in the middle of the room, and there dines alone; and Gemma was too proud to bear this. Once she fainted outright, and they were afraid to punish her after that.'

'I wonder if that girl would have been different under different management,' said Mrs. Dalzell, musingly.

'So she came home,' continued Imelda, 'but the first time the marchese came she hid behind a curtain; and the next, when the contessa sent for her, she had gone to bed; then her uncle was very angry, and said she should go back to Sta. Caterina; yet, when next the marchese spent the evening with them, and he wished her good evening, Gemma said, "You need not come again for I detest you, and will never marry you — a happy evening;" and he went away, and soon after he died.'

'Of grief?'

'No, it was influenza, he was very old; but is it not strange of Gemma? Mamma has not let me see much of her; I never heard of such a thing before, except in an English book.'

Irene looked mischievous, and Mrs. Dalzell perceived that such things did sometimes happen, even in Rome. She asked what the English book was.

'One that Irene had; we began it when she gave me English lessons; it was about a youth who married without his mother's consent; but mamma said we had better not read it, because it was wrong even to think of such things; it might happen in England, but Catholics would never do so.'

'I hope it is as uncommon in England as among Roman Catholics,' said Mrs. Dalzell, with some emphasis; but, perceiving by Irene's startled look that she was on dangerous ground, she added, 'Now, suppose we go on; I should like to go up to that fountain.'

A wide flight of steps lay before them, ending in a stone platform; another similar flight succeeded with a fountain above it, on either side of which were about six narrow and steep steps; the water came tumbling down over a succession of miniature terraces into a basin, whence it disappeared under ground. Low walls closed in the steps and platforms, crowned by vases full of aloes, whose stiff yet graceful leaves rose like a crown above them. Mrs. Dalzell and the two girls sat down on the lowest of the little steps by the fountain; Irene bared her arm and reached through the dashing water for maidenhair fern to fringe the bouquet which Mrs. Dalzell had collected, and they sat in pleas-

ant idleness and silence, lulled by the sound of the waters, whose reflection waved on the ground amid the shadows flung by two gigantic plane trees, which leant forward into the blue air all suffused with sunshine; their huge roots had almost shattered the walls beside which they grew. Behind, cypresses, ilexes, and other trees formed a background; below lay the far-reaching gardens, divided by dark hedges into a main avenue, and a succession of formal squares, each containing a grass-plat and a fountain, throwing up silver plumes with a murmur lost in distance. The white arcades of the palace rose beyond the high iron trellises, but not a living creature was visible about it — all was so still, so deserted, so untrimmed, and yet so lovely, that it might have been the domain of the Sleeping Beauty. Mrs. Dalzell said so, and found that Imelda did not understand, whereupon she gave an outline of the fairy tale to Irene, and bade her tell it to the signorina in Italian, which she did, filling it up with such poetical embellishments as made Mrs. Dalzell listen with as much interest as if it had been a new story, and wonder if the power of improvisation were inherent in all the children of the south, or if it were only part of Irene's artist temperament.

'Do you know who the Sleeping Beauty is, Imelda?' asked Irene, after a pause. 'She is Italy! She has been laid in a magic trance; but by an evil, not a good fairy, and now is about to wake.'

Imelda had listened, with the utmost attention, and now asked if English girls read such tales? Mrs. Dalzell found that she could not explain what English story-books were, and asked what were Imelda's favorites; expecting, from Irene's assertion that her friend had been well educated, that 'Dante,' or 'D'Azeglio,' might be the answer. After some consideration came a reply.

'I have read the *History of Rome.*'

'But you don't read that for amusement?'

'No,' Imelda replied, evidently uncertain what she did read for amusement. 'Mamma says that when I am married I may read romances. Gemma reads them now — in French. I want to read some that mamma has, translated from the English; they are written by the Signor Gualtiero Scott, a *cavaliere*, I think he was. Luigi likes them.'

'Ah! you heard us discussing them!' said Irene.

'Yes, I know he liked them; and Signor Nota said Grossi's books owed a great deal to them; but I could not understand, as I never read them nor those of Grossi; I cannot talk as you do,' said Imelda, remembering how Ravelli had turned to Irene when he found that she understood what he was talking of. 'But some day I shall read a great deal if Luigi will let me.'

Mrs. Dalzell was so much attracted by the innocent look and manner, that she took the young girl's hand and said, 'I am quite sure that he will wish it, and you will find a great many English books that you will think very pleasant reading. Three years ago, Irene read as little as you; when you are as old, I dare say you will know as much.'

'It would please me,' said Imelda, looking up at Irene with a shy smile; and Mrs. Dalzell wondered whether Ravelli really could be indifferent to this engaging child; perhaps it might be that he was too young himself to feel the charm of her affection and simplicity; and one older, whose love was more vehement and less attainable, might easily bewitch him more. She was occupied by grave musings as to how the entanglement would end, and whether Signora Olivetti were blind to the true state of the case; and she said little more till roused by the voices of a party of men, going past on the road, behind and below the gardens, towards the gate of San Pancrazio. They were singing in parts with great spirit, and once more it was Leone's hymn. Irene heard with a thrill of proud delight; as the voices died away in the distance, she rose and pointed to the hills, whence the last sunset tints were vanishing. The city was fast melting into blue twilight, if indeed twilight can be said to exist in Italy; a fire-fly darted past and vanished in the ilexes. It was indeed time to go, and as they slowly walked back to the gates, darkness came on so fast that only voices close at hand revealed that others were in the garden though unseen. 'Leone!' murmured Irene, and they distinguished, the next moment, what he was saying. 'Out with the barbarians! let reforms wait; though, if ever they were needed, we need them; but, before all things, let us be free; let us devote ourselves to driving out the Austrians — our soil has been trampled by them far too long.'

'Right!' answered a voice, whose deep music came thrilling on the ear; 'freedom we seek for; without freedom, religion is oppressed, but without religion, liberty becomes anarchy.'

He paused, perceiving he had other auditors besides Leone; Mrs. Dalzell stood once more face to face with Padre Rinaldi. Imelda kissed his hand, and he told Irene that he had left the poor mother calm and resigned. Leone had not heard of the incident, which Irene briefly explained as they walked back through the quadrangle, where Padre Rinaldi took leave of them, and they paused an instant to watch his tall figure disappear in the thickening shades of the Lung' Ara, before they got into the carriage which stood waiting for them.

'I should hardly have expected to find many of your acquaintances among the priests, Leone,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'I have more enemies than friends among them.'

'Oh, Signor Nota!' said Imelda.

'She is thinking of our Roman saying,' said Irene, 'The vengeance of a priest endures to the seventh generation!'

'That is a terrible proverb, Irene,' said Mrs. Dalzell, startled.

'You will often hear it quoted, signora; but Padre Rinaldi is an exception even among the good men of his profession; and there are many excellent, devoted priests, but very few who have broken the bonds of circumstance sufficiently to be reformers. I am proud to be called his friend; there is not a man on earth more truly Italian in heart than he. When I meet with one of that stamp, I could fall on my knees before him; for none can conceive the enormous yoke of past precedent and authority which a priest has to shake off before he can think for himself and dare to be a patriot.'

'I am afraid of him,' half whispered Imelda; 'he always seems to know what I am thinking of.'

'What would Signor Ravelli say to that, signorina?'

Imelda smiled and whispered to Irene, 'I am sure Padre Rinaldi would say I am too silly to be Luigi's wife; I always feel so when I hear Luigi or the padre talking of politics, but I like to listen.'

'Yes, I know you do,' answered Irene, laughing and sighing; 'you are very patriotic when Ravelli talks of Italy.'

They left Imelda at her own dwelling, and returned to Palazzo Clementi. Irene had scarcely entered the sitting-room, and begun to detail their adventures to Vincenzo, before Leone, who had lingered to speak to Mrs. Dalzell, came in with a joyous, bounding step, and exclaimed, 'I have news for you; I kept it till you were both together.'

He stood where he could see the faces of both brother and sister, Vincenzo lying on a sofa, Irene seated in a low chair beside him. Both looked up smiling and inquiring, as if catching a vision of good news from his own glad face.

'Farini is to be promoted,' he said; then pausing to see what effect the announcement would have. Farini was the man who held a post in the *Dateria* just above him. An exclamation escaped Irene, she colored brightly, and looked up with eager anxiety. Vincenzo held closer the hand she had just put into his, as he answered, 'That is news worth hearing, Leone! Now you are sure of a step!'

'It will certainly be hard if I do not get it, after keeping my post by miracle all this time! Assunta's husband must almost have worn out his interest in protecting me; I know he thinks it was for his sins that he ever was cursed with a liberal brother-in-law! Yes, I must have Farini's post unless some one is raised over my head, and I don't think fortune will play me such a trick. It has not been officially announced yet; but we all know that Farini is to have a rise, and I, for one, am quite ready to congratulate him. And then, Irene?' he added, playfully, but his dark eyes spoke eloquently as he looked at her.

She had laid her head on Vincenzo's shoulder, and it was he who answered, putting the hand he had been holding into Leone's, 'If she has nothing to say, I have, Leone; I make her over to you,' and Irene did not object.

It was important news. Leone, when raised a step in his business, would be able to afford to marry. They had repeatedly calculated the chances of such good fortune, and yet it was startling when it did come. Irene sat almost silent, with a sweet, serious look, as Leone spoke of the future; Vincenzo answered more warmly than she did, but Irene never said much when most happy. Leone knew her of old, and he looked anything but dis-

satisfied. Vincenzo did not feel himself in their way; both looked to him for sympathy, almost as much as to each other, and he was deeply sensible of the delicacy that had prompted Leone to withhold this news, till he could share it with him as well as with Irene.

After a while Irene rose to seek Nanna, who had grown very infirm of late, so much so, that she was quite unable to escort Irene to and from the theatre or to Madame Marriotti's house, near as it was; and she had been superseded in this office by an elderly person, whom Madama Cecchi knew and could trust, to the great displeasure of the old nurse, though she had grumbled whenever obliged to go. She had taken Irene's betrothal greatly to heart; Leone was no favorite of hers, he had never given her a paul in his life; he was poor and not noble; Nanna considered that Irene was throwing herself away, and would have felt that she was doing her young mistress a kindness by preventing such a marriage. It was such a straightforward thing too! Nanna would so have enjoyed a little mystery; it was hard that Irene would never give her a chance of carrying notes or messages, and making a *scudo* or two by them!

Irene had really suffered not a little during the past year from Nanna's increasing ill-humor; but she bore with her for the sake of her past services, and even turned as deaf an ear as she could when Nanna gave a slap at Leone.

Influenza had been prevalent at Rome that autumn, the fatal Roman *grippa;* Madama Cecchi had had it, the servants had been laid up with it; there was a mortality in the city, though no one in Palazzo Clementi had yet died of it. Nanna had been complaining all the last week, and had become strangely altered. She was more bent and haggard, her coffee-colored skin had assumed a ghastly hue, and the severe bleeding, which was the favorite remedy for *grippa*, had drained away all her strength. Irene found her out of spirits and hardly appearing to hear her cheerful greeting. She sat down by her, and told her where she had spent the afternoon, but Nanna's head was wandering after other matters, and presently she muttered, 'You will be going to marry him soon, *figlia!*' Irene almost believed that she must have been thinking aloud, and asked quickly, 'Who told you that, Nanna?'

The old woman looked up sharply, her dimmed eyes brightened, and it was with her old look of mingled coaxing and cunning that she answered: 'I know, I know, my darling — when is it to be?'

'I cannot quite tell you, Nanna, but Leone is to have a better post in the *Dateria* soon, and then I suppose — I hope — we shall be able to marry. Say you are glad, dear nurse, you have always been so kind to me!'

'Ay, *figlia*. I am glad, to be sure; and so you are very happy?' said Nanna, passing her wrinkled hand over the glossy braids of Irene's hair. 'So my darling is to be married! — ah, well — well!'

Irene stayed a little while longer and left her looking quite alive again, so much so, that as soon as she was alone, she hobbled to the door, peered out till assured that no one was near, and then went across to the apartment of the Contessa Clementi.

CHAPTER XIII.

Chi luogo e tempo aspetta,
Vede alfin la sua vendetta.
Proverb.

WHATEVER might be the information conveyed by Nanna, it was forwarded immediately by Gemma to her brother, but he did not write to her in return, and nearly a ortnight elapsed uneventfully. The days were at their shortest, darkness had come down on the palace, the fountain murmured in the quadrangle, the corridors were wrapped in gloom. A little spot of red light, glowing through one of the high grated windows of the Contessa Clementi's apartment, showed that candles had been lighted within. The contessa and her daughter sat together — the former, a frail invalid, leaning in her arm-chair, her white thin hand resting on a book of prayers, which lay on a table beside her, her feet on a kind of stool filled with hot charcoal. There was no fire nor stove in the large dreary room, which was only lighted by a single candle on the table; heavy red curtains draped the windows and doors; along the walls stood large ancient chairs of black wood, much gilt, whereon many generations of Clementi had sat; a piano was the only modern piece of furniture.

Opposite to her mother sat Gemma, like her, wrapped in a shawl. She was at work on some rich material, embroidered with gold thread, stiff with decoration, and doubtless intended as a mantle for some image of the Virgin. The table was half covered with gold and silver thread and patterns; her needle moved fast, less as if it were a labor of love than a vent for concealed impatience; and she scarcely made any response when her mother's querulous voice uttered, from time to time, complaints of her daughter's unsociability.

'I was just as well off when you were in the convent, Gemma,' said she; 'I thought when you came home I should have a companion, but I find your aunt is right in thanking Heaven that she has no daughters.'

'She has certainly not the trouble of marrying them,' answered Gemma, without lifting her eyes from the golden flowers that grew fast upon her work.

'There again, Gemma, you might have been well married; you would have been a widow now, with a good fortune, if you had not been so perverse. Who do you suppose will marry a girl with no money, and what is to become of you when I am dead?'

'It does not matter,' answered the girl, half aloud, and tapping her foot on the floor.

'What are you saying? I cannot hear a word. I wish Pietrucchio would write or come home, I miss him dreadfully; and I cannot understand what this journey means, or where the money to travel with comes from, or what he is about, mixing himself up with these low people; but as long as his uncle is satisfied, I am. I do insist, Gemma, that you show yourself more respectful towards your uncle. Recollect that he can send you back to Sta. Caterina when he pleases.'

'I almost wish I were there,' said Gemma, breaking her thread in utter impatience, but not speaking loud enough to be heard. 'May I go to my aunt?' she asked, standing up.

'Your aunt does not want you; she has visitors, or she would have come here. Why are you in a hurry to go? When I was a girl, I sat all day at my work, and never wanted to leave my mother's side; but as for you, you are always desirous to leave me.'

'You did very well without me for a good many years, mamma,' said Gemma, thinking to herself that she had not been brought up to find a mother her natural companion.

'That is a reason why you should make up for it the more now; you were noble, your uncle got admittance at Sta. Caterina for you, like other girls of your rank; we could not afford to send you to the Sagro Cuore. You learn these strange ideas from Mademoiselle Mori, I suppose.'

'There is my uncle,' said Gemma, who had been listening attentively to the sound of a carriage driving into the quadrangle, and now caught the sound of approaching steps.

'Your uncle? he must have come on business — I hope you have got on with that work, or he will be displeased,' said the contessa, rising feebly but hastily to receive the relation who ruled the whole family with despotic power. A liveried servant, who, when in his undress, enacted the parts of both cook and housemaid in the establishment, threw open the door, and announced Monsignore Clementi, and an ecclesiastic entered, saluted his sister-in-law, suffered Gemma to kiss his hand, and seated himself in one of the ponderous chairs which the footman had placed for him near the table. A short and solemn pause ensued; the contessa looked nervous and anxious; Gemma resumed her work, but a ray of hope lit the eyes which she occasionally turned towards the door.

Monsignore Clementi was, like a hundred other men of his age and position, of middle stature, with a large, bald forehead, and dark eyes, small and astute, a face at once self-indulgent and shrewd, a figure inclined to corpulence, but not without a certain dignity.

The silence remained unbroken till he said, with a glance at Gemma, 'By and by I shall have something to say to you, my dear sister.'

'Instantly,' replied the contessa, in evident trepidation. 'Gemma, it is growing late — your uncle permits you to retire.'

'A happy night, my dear uncle,' said Gemma, again kissing his hand; then she saluted her mother, and left the room. A few moments after she returned to another door leading into it, listened for a moment with a look of the bitterest scorn to her uncle's voice laying down the law, and the hasty and submissive replies of her mother, and then softly glided into the ante-room. The next instant she stood outside in the corridor, glancing fearfully up and down with a guilty look. No one was in sight, and with swift steps she hurried down the first flight of stairs, pausing in the midst of the darkness on the landing-place. A voice whispered, 'I am here,' and the hand put out to feel for her, drew her into the angle, where stood, unseen, but not unexpected, Ravelli.

'Ah!' she said, grasping his hand with a sigh of relief, 'you are there!'

'I have waited at least an hour; but it was very well you were here no sooner. My princess, do you know that I encountered your reverend uncle? I was in the corridor, and had no resource, except to become your gardener, and be very busy with the orange-trees, and he stopped and bade me look after the garden better. I thought some awkward questions might be coming, but some excellent person called "Pa," down below, so I begged his pardon, and answered the summons before "Pa" could appear.'

He was still overflowing with mirth at his adventure. Gemma broke in impetuously, 'Do you know why he came? I can tell you — I should not be here if he had not come. What a life it is — watched day and night, threatened continually with the convent, or to be sold to some old man, who may be the greatest wretch on earth for aught they care, so long as he is rich. There they are discussing it now — mamma saying, "Noble of course," — my uncle, "I have begged Mattei to write me word if he hear of a good match for her; but with her small dowry we must not be too particular."'

'Let them try to sell you if they dare! Clementi is for us, the times are for us; only do not you give way, Gemma,' and his tone was passionately earnest.

'I!' she answered with a low scornful laugh, though she had shivered from head to foot at her brother's name — 'I! And you see that the whole world cannot prevent our meeting.'

'No, while they are quietly planning your marriage. Fate is hard on us, Gemma, is she not? but we will conquer her yet; yes, all the three Fates. Come the worst, we will try a little poverty together and another country.'

'Anywhere! I could breathe more freely in any place but this.'

'England, which has sheltered so many exiles? No, too cold and foggy; Spain would do better — Spain, sunnier even than our Italy. I will turn fisherman, and we will have a cottage under the rocks near the blue sea, with vines and fig-trees, and you shall sing to me while I mend my nets, and we will fly away like the swallows and forget Italy, Gemma.'

'You are not in earnest,' she replied, sullenly.

'No, I am not in earnest,' he returned, with a light laugh, that showed how rapidly vehemence and carelessness succeeded each other in his gay and variable mind; 'I could not forget my old love for my new — Rome held me captive long before you did, Gemma.'

'If that's all you have to say, I may as well go back,' she answered, seeking to free her hands, which he held fast, exclaiming, 'Silly child! who knows when we may be able to meet again? Do you think I shall let you go in this way? Stay, I am in earnest, quite in earnest now; suppose this marriage project come to anything, what are we to do?'

'You had better marry Imelda Olivetti.'

'They shall fish me drowned out of the Tiber first. What do I know of a child whom I never see except by her mother's side? Let my father answer it to the Olivetti as he can — I have told him, as plainly as I can speak, that I do not feel myself bound by this — this family project. I know one who would marry us, Gemma, if it comes to the point; there is always that resource, let what will come after.'

'I am ready,' was her reply.

He uttered some ardent words of gratitude. 'But why,' he added, 'why do you always protest against my speaking to your brother? Do you think he does not see that I love you? Clementi not see it! he who sees everything; why he has countenanced it by seeming not to see.'

'No, don't trust — don't — don't — oh, put yourself in no one's power, trust no one,' she whispered fast and low.

'Not even you?'

'You do trust me?' asked Gemma, suspiciously, and bitterly repenting what she had said.

'Yes, I trust you, Gemma,' answered Ravelli, with momentary sternness; for blind as his love was, he felt that one so well practised in deceiving others might one day deceive him also. 'I trust you; and take care you do not cheat me, for if you do I will never trust man nor woman more, and never forgive it!'

For a moment all was storm in Gemma's mind. She had

rarely heard that tone on the lips of the light-hearted Luigi, and she exclaimed, 'If you loved me, you would not speak so. I know you would cast me off, if you thought my brother was a Paptista.'

'Have I done so because you are the niece of Monsignore Clementi? Do you think I don't know what he is, with his spies in every *café!* What is that to me, while you are my own Gemma?' said Ravelli, instantly repenting, as he perceived how much moved she was.

'Hush! hush!' she whispered in terror, shrinking close to him, as a step became audible on the stairs. 'Who can be coming? Oh, let me go!'

Instead of releasing her, Ravelli clasped her fast and close; they held their breath, as a ray of light came up and illuminated a little space around — the intruder had a lamp! All her courage scarcely enabled her to remain still, though, like Ravelli, she had remembered that her own door would be closed, and to be found standing outside would be as fatal as being discovered on the stairs. They drew back into the furthest corner, her face hidden against him, and his arm thrown protectingly around her, as he watched, with a defiant look, for the new comer. The light increased and came nearer, but they still stood in deep shadow. Some one wrapped in a cloak passed, without casting a glance around, and the sound of his steps died away in the corridor. Ravelli muttered a thanksgiving, but Gemma seemed still stupefied with alarm, and bade him imperiously to let her go. 'Giorgio will open the door, I am sure — don't keep me one moment,' she repeated, as Ravelli urged caution and sought to fix another meeting, and the next instant she had flown down the corridor, and throwing something against a window, leant against the wall, waiting in great impatience till the servant opened the door, peeped out, and admitted her.

'Signorina, signorina, do you know that the count has returned?' he whispered.

'I know,' said Gemma, 'I heard his step,' and she immediately went into her mother's room. Clementi was there, so was monsignore his uncle, by whom, perhaps, the nephew's arrival was not wholly unexpected, and there appeared to be no want of

cordiality between them, though rumor said that they had been at daggers drawn, ever since the young count had openly taken the popular side.

Gemma met her brother with composure that did not betray her inward alarm, and he showed no consciousness of having already seen her, but she knew him too well to be reassured by this. The contessa was excited into unusual talkativeness by her son's sudden return, and Gemma sat by in silence, growing every moment less able to control herself, till Clementi called her aside. She faced him boldly. His first words were, 'I acted on your letter.'

They restored all her audacity. 'It was worth sending, was it not?'

'Yes. Have you no more to tell me?'

'Nanna is very ill, but there is nothing else new.'

'Very good,' said Clementi, then looking at her with a rapid, stealthy glance. 'The stairs are cold at night.' He had seen them! She looked full at him in silence, and he continued, 'Be so kind as to be cautious; people may think we lean *too* much to the liberal side;' and he was going back to his seat when she exclaimed, low, but emphatically, 'Take care! I should make a dangerous enemy.'

'Oh yes,' answered Clementi, very quietly, 'I have no wish to quarrel with so useful an ally; in fact, neither of us could do without the other at present, only be careful lest, for the honor of the family, I should be obliged to notice the affair.'

'You know what *he* came for,' said Gemma, with a glance at her uncle. 'Mind! no marrying.'

'We agreed on that point long ago; I tell you we cannot afford to play each other false,' replied Clementi; 'come back, there is no need to say any more.'

Monsignore Clementi had no more time for his neice's affairs that night. He remained late, shut up with his nephew, and any one who had caught a glimpse of the two, the old man with his astute face supported on his hand, his keen eyes fixed on his nephew, and his whole attention given to some matter which the younger man was demonstrating with acute and rapid explanations, by the help of the papers which covered the whole table

between them — any one who had witnessed this scene would have suspected that Count Pierfrancesco Clementi was giving an account of his mission to the wrong party. Nor would they have conjectured amiss.

By birth and education, Clementi belonged to those who for years had oppressed the liberals, and labored to extinguish every spark of reform with sword, banishment, fine, and imprisonment — of whom it was justly said that they exterminated the liberals without compassion for the tears of women or the cries of children — who organized a vast system of espionage, and caused the Papal Government to be held in abhorrence; while the people became daily more corrupted by the degradation and treachery which such a system generated. This party were losing ground every day; they were in disgrace; those whom they had oppressed, ruled over them, and they necessarily cherished a deadly hatred towards the triumphant side, and the Pope who had caused their own downfall. Their only chance of regaining their ancient power was to drive the people to such excesses as should terrify the friends of reform, and the ultra-liberals aided them but too well.

It was no hope of bettering his fortune, that had led Count Clementi from the ranks of the Neri into those of the Bianchi. Three years back he little foreseen where 1847 would find him. Admiration for Irene had led him to seek the acquaintance of Vincenzo, when he discovered that Nanna could not help him, a fact which she concealed from him as long as possible. The few words that passed in their first meeting, and the book which Vincenzo was studying, instantly showed him what line he must take in order to propitiate her; but far too adroit to feign himself one of a party whom he could hardly be supposed not to detest, he presented himself in the tempting light of a possible convert, allowed Vincenzo to overcome one prejudice after another, seeking out, at the same time, men known for their liberal opinions, so as to give consistency to his conduct, and finally, deceiving even those most suspicious, and reluctant to trust a *ci-devant* Papista. His was a strange and most subtle nature, full of fiery passions, yet able entirely to conceal them, and waiting for the right moment for months or years before the slightest sign of them was given;

and his singularly acute and crafty mind delighted in weaving scheme after scheme, always unweariedly constructing them anew if the threads were broken. To win Irene was the point on which he had centred all his powers. He had instantly divined Nota's feelings towards her, and assured himself that she did not see or think about them; but Nota's long silence was a mystery to him, till it struck him that she must have silenced him, as had been the case with himself the first time he had ventured beyond friendship. He had then instantly drawn back, apparently content to be her friend only. He bided his time. Meanwhile it did not suit him to lose the favor of his uncle, and he found it convenient to be one of the many spies whom Monsignore Clementi privately maintained; and thus — while an absolute breach seemed to have taken place between them, and they ignored each other if they met in public, the secrets of the Bianchi quietly passed into the keeping of the enemy without any suspicion being aroused.

Never had Clementi been more perplexed than when admitted to a knowledge of the secret society founded by Leone. He would gladly have betrayed him, and got rid of him forever; but he could hardly do so without raising such suspicion as would forever divide himself from Irene. The police, however, got scent of the association, and as a preliminary measure, ordered Vincenzo to leave Rome — a step particularly unwelcome to Clementi, who hastened secretly to exert all his interest to annul the order, and succeeded. While they were seeking for further intelligence of the society, Pope Gregory died, and a new reign had begun.

Gemma had been a useful auxiliary to her brother, who was perfectly aware of her connexion with Ravelli, and allowed it on the tacit condition that she should keep up an intimate acquaintance with Irene, to whom he had made her known as soon as she came home from her convent. To her and Nanna he owed the information of Leone's expected promotion, on which he had instantly acted. Gemma knew well what was the price set upon her meetings with Ravelli, and she, moreover, knew Clementi too well to believe he would countenance them a moment longer than he could help. She feared she might have gone a step too far

this evening. Often and often she had been on the point of avowing all to Ravelli, but always the double fear of him and of her brother sealed her lips, though the struggle was horrible as she felt the net closing on her, and knew she dared not be true, even to him.

Leone's engagement to Irene had been a blow altogether unexpected by Clementi. In the uncertainty of the time of its termination in marriage, it had never been publicly avowed, and even Nanna had but lately been told of it. To delay such a termination, to wait in hope that time might bring him good fortune, was all that Clementi could do; but he never for a moment doubted his ultimate success. No sleuth hound could have tracked its prey more patiently and obstinately, or more fiercely than he, and, thoroughly aware of the feelings of both the rival parties in Rome, he foresaw the coming outburst, and perceived that at such a time a rival might easily disappear from the scene. When Leone was gone, Clementi would remain with the claim of a love constant through repulse, older even than Leone's; Irene — the true, frank, loving Irene — must be his at last!

The conversation between the nephew and uncle terminated deep in the night. As Monsignore Clementi rose to go, he said with indifference, 'I attended to that affair of young Nota's; you were right to warn me; such as he must be kept down. My people tell me that when he comes into the *cafés*, the young men call out, "Here is Nota; come, Leone, tell us something of the old times;" and it seems he is an improvvisatore. Improvisation ought to be forbidden by law; such as he fill people's heads with treason. He must be looked after.'

'Of course, nor would it be well for young Luigi Ravelli to have the Olivetti fortune to add to his own; I would take every opportunity of hindering that marriage.'

'We keep an eye upon him also; but mark you, my nephew,' said Monsignore Clementi, pausing, with the forefinger of his right hand on the palm of his left — 'mark you, such as he are working for us; he throws himself headlong into the arms of the extreme party without seeing where they are rushing. It is they who are our chief auxiliaries. I could count you at this moment how many agents of Mazzini there are in Rome, sent,

as you know, first to Paris — supplied there with money — forwarded here. We know their movements as well as Mazzini himself, but do we interfere with them? No. The times and the extremists are tending one way, let them alone; by and by they will think temporal reforms are not enough, they will attack the spiritual power, and then it is our turn. The tide will turn, but we must let it reach its height first.'

'There are few who contemplate the future as calmly as you,' said Clementi.

'We raise an outcry as if heaven and earth were coming together, instead of there being every prospect that our power will stand firmer than ever. Pio Nono is above all things a priest; that is what these men have yet to find out; we have not a king at our head, but a Pope; Pio is not Henry VIII. of England. Look at the English Reformation; the Parliament and nation believed they were merely controlling the temporal power of the clergy — how did that end? Do you suppose they foresaw it would land them in Protestantism? Not they; the actors in events never see where they will be carried. Here, let men make this a lay Government, and the spiritual will go too, but it will rise again. It is the moderatists whom we have to dread — men after the Pope's own heart — men like Rossi, who want to go gradually — that would ruin everything.'

'The spirit of the times is too strong for them,' said Clementi; 'they will be carried away by it, like a reed on the Tiber. Once let any Italian state break out into revolution, and the wildfire will spring up here spontaneously. You saw how ready it is to break out by those papers I showed you.'

'You will see the flames either in Austria or in Naples before many months pass; I catch their reflection on the horizon already, Pietrucchio; and, as you say, this Hungarian mission of yours shows what the democrats expect. Yes, Naples will be the first; the people there are held tighter every day, while they see other states, what they call, reforming themselves; our wisdom is to sit still. Good night; of course I shall come here no more while you are at home; you know how to send me any intelligence; be cautious, and keep up a friendship with Nota. That young man has talent, you should buy him over.'

'It cannot be done,' said Clementi.

'So you have said before, which amounts to this, that you do not know his price. Every man has one; let me tell you there are not six men of my acquaintance, who, if they had to choose between a serious inconvenience and a crime, would not choose the latter. He ought to be on our side; it would shake the liberal cause seriously. There are very few half as formidable as he, for the most part all this outcry is mere noise.'

'They complain out of mere want of something else to do,' said the count, with undetected irony; for Monsignore Clementi was entirely and truly incapable of perceiving that the laity had even a particle of justice on their side.

'They do. They set themselves up as wiser than those who have inherited the sacred power of our ancestors. But enough of this; good night.'

'A happy night, my dear uncle.'

Monsignore Clementi descended the stairs ruminating over the intelligence which his nephew had brought him, and making a mental abstract of it to be communicated to certain of his colleagues; the count smiled to himself as he thought that even his uncle did not perceive the whole of the plot, and Gemma was alone in her room, on her knees before a crucifix, while drowned in tears, she allowed broken words to escape her lips — 'I dare not — I dare not tell him — but sooner or later he will know — will find all out — and never pardon me — oh, how will it end!'

CHAPTER XIV.

Quanti cei n'è che mi senton cantare,
Diran: buon per colei c'ha il cor contento!
S'io canto, canto per non dir del male;
Faccio per iscialar quel c'ho qua dentro:
Faccio per iscialar mi afflitta doglia;
Sebbene io canto, di piangere ho voglia:
Faccio per iscialar l'afflitta pena,
Sebbene io canto, di dolor son piena.

RISPETTO.

THE bell of the parish church near Palazzo Clementi tolled slowly, summoning the devout to gain indulgences by attending the Viaticum to a dying person; and presently a boy in a white surcoat came forth on the steps and rang a smaller bell, till a little crowd of various ranks had collected, from whom the priest chose the most respectable, rejecting a charcoal-burner, blackened from head to foot, and furnished them with lighted waxen tapers, two of which were raised on poles and guarded by glass lanterns, lest a sudden gust should extinguish all at once; for without light the Host or *Santissima*, as the Romans say, cannot be carried. The procession began to move slowly from the church, headed by two boys, one still ringing his bell, the other bearing a sort of miniature wooden altar. Those who had volunteered to carry the tapers followed in pairs, guided by one who walked nearly in the centre and assumed the direction of them. Last came the priest carrying the Host in a star-like shrine, and the sacristan holding the canopy above it; a crowd followed behind, some of whom accompanied it all the way to its destination, others only a few yards; all hats were taken off, and the people knelt as it passed. Where a carriage was standing still, the driver dismounted from his coach-box and joined the worshippers. All movement and traffic were suspended for an instant, as men were called on to acknowledge the Holy Presence; and, hushing the

light words of the idle and the serious ones of the busy, rose up the chanted Psalm, the solemn Prayer. Though the hour was still early, the short winter day had ended, but the obscurity was lighted by the lamps that shone from every window, as the peculiar well-known sound of the little bell gave notice that the Viaticum was passing, and all hastened to pay this customary mark of respect. The procession paused under the archway of Palazzo Clementi, the priest and a few of the attendants bore the Host up-stairs, the rest waited below, praying for the departing spirit of one, of whom they knew no more than that the soul was about to stand before its Judge.

That day had the doctor, after his visit to old Nanna, spoken the ominous words, 'Make her see her confessor,' and he being summoned had heard her last shrift. She had bequeathed such property as she possessed to Irene, and the parish priest was about to administer the Communion to his dying parishioner. The table, covered with a linen cloth, was prepared opposite to the bed to receive the Holy Elements; the old woman awaited him, calm in the belief that all her sins were remitted; Irene was with her, but when the Host was brought, left the room — she was a Protestant, and could not be admitted at the Communion of the Roman Catholic Church.

About an hour after she sought Vincenzo, looking much cheered, and saying, 'The doctor has been here again, and says Nanna is wonderfully better; he thinks she will rally. Oh, what a day it has been! what dismay we were all in this morning! Mrs. Dalzell was the only one not frightened out of her wits; she says English people are much less afraid of illness than we are, but then they have not such sudden, violent attacks. They do not leave a house when some one is dead; even women go to the funeral.'

'It seems to be conducted very differently from one here,' said Vincenzo. 'I remember when our father died, how comforting I thought the service that was read. There is little comfort in the way the dead are treated here.'

'No,' said Irene, with a shudder; 'no respect, no decency — no one who cares present. Oh, one could not bear to see the body of any one that we had loved carried with a dozen others

to that pit where they are all heaped together. Don't speak of it.'

'You look fagged, dear child,' said Vincenzo. 'Come here.'

'I cannot, I ought to have practised my songs long ago,' said Irene, who had to sing at a private party that evening. 'I had not the heart to do so before. I think there is something in me still, though,' she added, warbling a brilliant variation. 'Madame Marriotti is going, and will take me; I had a note from her just now. Shall I disturb you, dear?'

Assured to the contrary, she opened the piano and sang some modern Italian songs — music so seductive and voluptuous that it seemed to steal into the heart and witch the senses as though an Armida sang them in her enchanted gardens to a Rinaldo. Looking up as she ended, Irene perceived that her brother was leaning back in his chair, doing nothing but listen.

'Am I preventing your reading?'

'How can I read grave books when you sing that wicked magic music, you naughty siren?'

'All passion, as German music is all spirit. I am not sure that I really like it. I should think better of modern Rome, if they admired Rossini less and Cimarosa more.'

'Madame Marriotti's true pupil! I remember the day when you raved about Rossini.'

'And, of course, I think his music excessively pretty — exquisite; but I had rather sing a severer kind. But tell me if you like this,' said Irene, striking the first chords of a kind of march, to which words equally spirited were set, and looking as she sang like a young priestess. Vincenzo had not heard it before, but instantly recognised the author of the words, and said, 'Leone's, to be sure; "methinks we do know the sweet Roman hand;"' a quotation which, with its compliment to Italian writing, he had been delighted with ever since he and Irene began to study Shakspeare together.

'I certainly am not in good voice to-night,' said Irene, anxiously, running over an exercise. 'I must steal some of Madama Cecchi's *pasta di cottonia* [quince jam] which she says is so good for singers.' As she rose from the piano the maid entered, and asked whether she knew how late it was. 'No! I must dress

this very moment — do you know how Signora Dalzell's headache is? Oh, don't go to see — I will, presently — ' but the girl was already knocking at Mrs. Dalzell's door, and receiving no reply, put her head in, exclaiming in a voice like that of a seagull,

'*Dorme?* she sleeps?' Luckily Mrs. Dalzell, though lying on her bed, was not asleep but reading, and Carmela perceiving a book still in her hand, was anxious to know what it was. Mrs. Dalzell showed her the title, knowing she was proud of being able to read, and Carmela, for the first time in her life, touched a Bible. Mrs. Dalzell was not quite aware that she put herself into a somewhat perilous position by encouraging an Italian to read an Italian translation which was not from the Vulgate. Carmela might have read *that* if she liked, though few priests would have given her much encouragement to do so.

'*La Bibbia Santa*,' she read aloud with great emphasis, but in evident uncertainty as to what it was. She leant on the foot of the bed with the plain purpose of having a little talk, and inquired if the book were not a history of the creation of the world and the generations of the Hebrew kings, and next whether confession were practised in England.

'It is permitted, not obligatory,' replied Mrs. Dalzell.

'So much the better,' said Carmela, twirling the *spazzola* or feather broom which she had brought in with her; 'the priests are rogues.'

'What!' exclaimed Mrs. Dalzell.

'They are rogues,' repeated the girl, with an expressive gesture; 'they eat up everything; for their sakes we are taxed; wine is dear, salt is dear, all to make the priests rich. If a man would have his son make a living now-a-days, he must make him a priest. In my country, and here too, you see more priests than laymen. All is for them.'

'Take care, Carmela; you will get into trouble if you talk so.'

'Pouf! I only say what every one knows. The Capucini are not so bad; they have wide sleeves, they are more secular, and know that we who live in the world cannot behave like monks; they give us absolution easily, but the Jesuits — eugh! Does the signora know my country?'

'I thought you were Roman, you speak very like one.'

'No, no, I come from Umbria — Perugia is my town; it is a beautiful place, with a cathedral, and cardinals, and schools, much cheaper than this; the fields are all flowers and the trees all grapes,' replied Carmela, waving her hands in the air. 'Does the signora know that I am married?'

'Married!' repeated Mrs. Dalzell, astonished that this ugly little elf should have a husband. 'How come you to be in service, then?'

'I had been only married six weeks when my husband was sent to prison, and then I sought a service,' said the girl, quite proud of having such a distinguished husband.

'Why was he sent to prison?'

'He owed money, and the creditor wanted it back; my husband told him candidly he would murder him unless he was quiet; and as he still insisted, he stabbed him, so he was sent to Spoleto. I can see him, but it takes much money. Ah! — here I am, running as if the police were after me,' cried Carmela, elevating her voice to its highest pitch, in answer to a distant call, and she rushed out of the room, slamming the door behind her and shouting a most inharmonious song.

Madama Cecchi received her with a scolding for always dawdling, which charge Carmela received first with a declaration that the English signora had detained her, and then that she had not been absent a moment. The war of words was terrific, but soon subsided, and Madama Cecchi, followed by the other maid, Menica, went to see how Irene's dressing was prospering. She was attired, all but her scarf, which the padrona put on for her, bidding her wear it coquettishly, now showing the slender waist, then letting it slip so as to display the bracelet and white arm, while Menica occasionally put in *her* oar, standing at Irene's glass smoothing her own thick hair. Irene listened laughing, and advanced into the sitting-room to show herself to Vincenzo, still pursued by last words from the padrona, who manœuvred a scarf as dextrously as a Spanish lady did her fan; but Nino was heard coming in and demanding his wife, and with an exclamation of 'What a worry!' away she went. Vincenzo had arranged Irene's music for her, and she was sitting by him, wait-

ing for a summons to go, when Leone came in, with so completely the look of one who had braced himself against a sudden misfortune, that both Vincenzo and Irene exclaimed together, 'Dear Leone! what has happened?'

'I have just heard that Farini is really promoted,' said Leone, with a voice that trembled with indignation and grief, as he threw himself into a chair; 'and another man is put over my head! So much for interest! A base, pitiful wretch, who is well known as a Sanfedist spy! one of Monsignore Clementi's *âmes damnées*, unless he be marvellously belied. Put over the heads of men who have worked hard for years! Is it not a charming specimen of how men prosper with a monsignore for their friend?'

Vincenzo was mute with dismay, and Irene's face, as she came and stood beside Nota, told what a blow this was.

'I heard it an hour ago,' continued Leone, 'and I have been walking up and down the corridor making up my mind to come in and tell you. Thrown back for years! Not even the consolation, that I have worked for this injustice!'

'Yes, you have, Leone; for you may be sure it is because old scores are remembered against you. Irene, you should remind him of the day when you wished he had everything to lose, that all might see how exactly the same course he would pursue.'

'But I want comfort too much myself to give any away,' said Irene, and Leone looked up at her, smiled and said, 'Come, if Fortune escape us in this way, we must catch her in another, the Sanfedists have not beaten us yet.'

'There! he is comforted, now that he has made you as unhappy as himself, Irene!'

'You don't imagine, for an instant, that I wish the past undone — or regret not having tried to propitiate the ruling powers? But hard I must feel it when hope is dashed away in this manner. It is up-hill work at the best, and if I have another chance of rising, the same thing may happen again.'

It was too true, and there was a sorrowful pause, till he added, 'I am not myself to-night — I had bad news this afternoon, and was forced to make a sad household sadder. Poor Donati! — I learnt his fate at last. He was condemned to fourteen years'

imprisonment, and his courage gave way — he poisoned himself!'

'Oh, Leone! And you had to tell his poor wife and mother!'

'Signorina, signorina, the carriage! and the signora begs you will come directly; she will be like a ferocious beast with anger, unless you do,' cried Carmela, bursting in and giving, to say the least, full effect to a message from Madame Marriotti, that she was ready. The recollection of her evening's work startled Irene; the contrast was ghastly between it and the double tidings she had just heard.

'Dear Leone, I must go — it is hard to-night,' said Irene, for the first time feeling that her profession had chains, as well as rose wreaths. 'Good night, Vincenzo. Leone, you will find time to come early to-morrow? — please!'

'Perhaps I may be still here when you come home,' said he, wrapping her mantle carefully round her. 'Sing well, and don't catch cold.'

'Your music!' said Vincenzo, as he saw her going without it. She came hastily back, and stooped to kiss him as she took it. He felt a tear on her cheek. Madama Cecchi came to hurry her away, and she knew that she must not linger a moment longer; but she looked back wistfully as she shut the door, and the mutual glance exchanged between her and Leone was the comfort of both for the rest of the evening. She was to sing at an English party, which seemed a London scene transported to Rome; there were the lighted rooms, the refreshments, the toilettes, that might have been seen in May Fair; English was spoken on all sides. Irene knew no one, and sat unnoticed, with full time for sad thought, before her turn came to sing. Madame Marriotti, absorbed in her own thoughts as usual, had not noticed her mournful expression, and woke to a consciousness that something had happened to trouble the young cantatrice, only when the unsteadiness of her first notes startled every one with the probability that she would break down. She recovered herself speedily, and ended amid great applause; Madame Marriotti asked, quite indignantly, what she had given her such a fright for? — was Vincenzo ill? — what had happened?

'Only a hope gone for the present; I will tell you as we go home,' said Irene, who had to attend the next moment to compliments from a celebrated tenor, who had appeared that season at one of the theatres. Madame Marriotti was much pleased, knowing that the great man would not have taken the trouble to be polite to the young *prima donna*, unless he had thought it worth his while; but muttered, as soon as he had moved away, 'She sings twice as well as he — I have no patience with the man, an affected fellow! he seems to think it a condescension to sing to us. I must say the child puts her heart into it.'

'Nature intended him to act a lover on the stage,' said Irene, 'he is so pretty!'

'Hark! there is Häse going to play — now we shall have something worth listening to,' said Madame Marriotti, and Irene was allowed to return to her thoughts till she was wanted to sing again a playful song, one which Vincenzo was particularly fond of. She had never sung it better, yet the room she had just left at Palazzo Clementi rose up all the while before her mental eyes, and it seemed to her that there was two Irenes, one performing a part in a brilliant assembly, giving an arch and coquettish song its fullest expression of mirth and malice, and the other sitting by Leone's side, sharing his disappointment, and weaving plans for the future. Applause fell on an unheeding ear; compliments were distasteful, and every moment an hour, as she sat longing to be gone, and think how soon happiness had spread her butterfly wings and fluttered away; all the grand and elevated views of a musician's destiny, which she had imbibed from Madame Marriotti, faded lamentably into the background this evening; but, as neither headaches nor heartaches can be openly avowed in society, Irene had to smile, and be courteous, and sing, when asked to do so.

Had she possessed clairvoyance, she would have discovered that there was some one besides Vincenzo and Leone in the sitting-room at the palace, namely Count Clementi, who was immediately made acquainted with what had happened, and manifested vehement indignation.

'So are served our best men! After all that has been said and done, where are our reforms? Are we any better off than

we were two years ago? Are the finances better managed, the law courts improved, commerce encouraged, or have the clergy given up a single privilege? We are treated like babies, amused with processions and shows, and Heaven knows what; but tell me of what single substantial improvement can we boast? We cannot move a step, but we feel the chains on hand and foot to remind us we are slaves.'

'We have no railroads here, count; and, if we had, reforms don't go by express train; and, though it is true we take ample time about them, the amnesty was enormous gain, and so is the steady progress of the Bianchi opinions,' said Vincenzo.

'Yes,' cried Leone, blazing up instantly at a subject which no liberal could calmly name; 'at least we are no longer mowed down at our enemies' pleasure; our citizens are not struck, robbed, abused, assassinated, misused in every conceivable manner. Some years back every road was closed — ay, and kept with a flaming sword — against a man so much as suspected of being a liberal; it was as if you were flung into the Tiber with a stone round your neck. Why, confiscation and death were things of daily occurrence; an anonymous charge was enough to bring a man to the scaffold.'

'And how many hundreds were exiled or imprisoned! And you suppose that the priests will calmly abdicate their power? that your slow-paced reforms will be allowed to go on? Oh, blind men, who will not see that a republic is the only hope of Rome!' said Clementi.

'No. No man can wish for that here; the bare idea would set Rome on fire,' said Vincenzo. 'The people are not strong enough for it; it would be putting a match to a mine of gunpowder. There is true strength in patience, count.'

'You would sow poppies, and expect them to last as long as ilexes,' said Leone.

'Everything would be well if the Ministers were honest,' said Vincenzo; 'if they would really follow out the Pope's schemes; but I don't see what is to come of the Pope's giving commands, and the people refusing to believe they emanate from him.'

'Don't you?' said Clementi, drily.

'Government had better beware!' exclaimed Leone. 'If the

Neri force us into a reckoning, they need not be surprised if we cast up the accounts our own way. Let them play us false, and the Tiber will run blood from St. Angelo to Ripa Grande. I don't say so on account of what has just happened to me, though far worse may happen any day with no redress — but it is not I, Leone, who am unjustly used, that is a trifle — it is Nota, the liberal, who is to be kept down!'

Clementi struck his forehead as if a thought has suddenly stung him. 'Nota! I am the cause of it all! you owe it all to me; doubtless it is my uncle's doing; you are my friend, and as such his enemy. I little thought what our friendship would cost you!'

'Of course I knew whose man it was that has stepped in,' answered Leone; 'but as for the rest — nonsense, count! true or not, what does that matter? You have lost more by taking our side than any man among us. Come, friend, you are not thinking of this? Do you suppose I cannot make my way in spite of fortune and her allies the Papiste?'

He made a slight, graceful gesture, as if defying them one and all, and held out his hand to Clementi, who looked thoroughly depressed by the conviction that it was through him that Nota had suffered. Vincenzo eagerly sought to convince him of the contrary, and Leone would not listen to a word on the subject; little guessing that, while he warmly assured him of his continual friendship, Clementi was secretly smiling in disdain, and almost scorned to plot against a man so easily deceived. They were interrupted by Cecchi, who asked in haste whether Irene had returned; Nanna seemed suddenly much worse, and extreme unction was about to be administered. It had been delayed hitherto on account of her apparent rallying in the afternoon.

Irene had not come. The day which had began in sorrow ended in the same manner; this time the old woman showed no signs of recovery; the priest returned, touched her limbs with the holy oil; spoke the last prayers for the dying over her while she lay unhearing, unconscious, and before Irene came home, the old nurse was dead.

Nanna had been the orphans' friend from their birth, and they

missed her much; they had loved her more than they knew. Their surprise was great when they found she had thought it worth while to make a will; for they had no idea she possessed a *bajocco;* but Irene inherited the contents of an earthenware pot, which Nanna had kept concealed by day and put under her pillow by night; and there was a considerable sum left even when the usual heavy funeral expenses were paid. A heap of coins, varying from half a *bajocco* to a gold piece, was found in it — how acquired no one knew. Clementi could have accounted for some of them, though in truth Nanna was richer than he; others had been given by people who commissioned her in days when she accompanied her young mistress to the theatre, to carry notes and messages; but Nanna knew Irene too well to do anything of the kind; she accepted every embassy, pocketed her reward, and said nothing about either. Clementi had first propitiated her, and to him she remained faithful, giving information to him or to Gemma of everything in Madama Cecchi's household which it concerned them to know; and, if she ever revealed her treachery, it was under the seal of the confessional, and Irene never knew of it; but probably Nanna did not see anything wrong in what she did, and would not have classed it amongst sins to be confessed.

In the unscrupulous old nurse Clementi lost a useful and unscrupulous ally, but he had made his footing sure with the brother and sister, and could do without her. When Irene had been made acquainted with his fear that he had brought ill-will upon Leone, she showed him an increase of friendliness, to console him for his supposed share in causing a disappointment which so nearly concerned herself. He was now far from being the only noble who had joined the popular side — two or three of the highest rank had long countenanced it; and many more gave it their adhesion on finding that the Court faction was growing less and less prosperous; but still the horizon darkened, and the agitation among the people grew more and more threatening.

The commencement of Pio Nono's reign resembled those brilliant southern days when heaven and earth seem enchanted into halcyon beauty, but which only precede the shock of the earth-

quake and the flow of the lava. The moderate liberals found their number daily diminished by desertions to the ultra party; wise men trembled, and the populace resisted, like an unbroken horse, when the least curb was put on their clamorous demands. Strong hands and heads were needed to rule them, and these were not numerous in the Pope's Cabinet.

The Ministers temporized, the Austrians threatened, and took the outrageous step of occupying Ferrara. A proclamation forbidding processions and *demostrazioni in piazza*, was issued at Rome; and produced violent discontent, for it touched the populace in a point as dear to them as the games of the circus had been to their ancestors. The people hated the Government more heartily for this trifle than for all the past grievances; for, after all, what the masses wanted was strong excitement. They had all something of the tiger nature, ready to break out savagely at any time; revolution would have pleased them better than reform; they were neither liberal nor Papal; and followed any leader who could win their favor.

The anniversary of the amnesty was marked by ominous tumults; there sprang up an extraordinary suspicion that a plot against the personal freedom of the Pope was brewing among the Sanfedists. Instead of a festal procession, howls for vengeance echoed through the streets; unknown hands put up a list of the supposed conspirators on the walls. They were well-known names; the military tore down the paper, a riot ensued, resulting in a popular triumph; when instead of severe measures of repression, the Secretary of State publicly praised the people for their moderation, and a notification was published by authority, that the authors of the supposed plot should be punished. Those suspected had already fled for their lives from the mob, who hunted them like wild beasts, and broke open their houses. Sad omens for the future did that June of 1847 bring; but better hopes might be gathered from the cry of indignation that rang throughout Italy against the Austrian invaders. The occupation of Ferrara had lighted up a flame which had blazed up far too fiercely to be extinguished, even when, tardily and grudgingly, the Court of Austria listened to the Papal remonstrances, and withdrew from that city. With one accord the Romans

offered arms, men, and money to the Pope; and, as if the love of their country had awakened at last in hearts hitherto devoted to self alone, the Gregoriani, the priests, and religious orders were foremost in the work. The very children met and practised military manœuvres; the peaceful, gentle Pio Nono found himself turned into a generalissimo just at the time when one of his chief counsellors had left him to go as ambassador to the Court of Sardinia, and death had deprived him of another.

But all these things were in the future, when Nota and his friends held the foregoing conversation in Palazzo Clementi.

CHAPTER XV.

Stranger, within these grounds, whoe'er thou art,
No limitation of thy freedom fear;
Go where thou wilt, and when thou wilt, depart;
Since for thy pleasure all is ordered here.

As all was golden in the age of gold,
Man trusted man, and laws were yet unknown;
Bound by no sterner code our friends we hold,
Than honor's law lays down for every one.

But who, with ill-design prepense, shall dare
The golden rules of courtesy to break,
Our villa's guardian bids that wight beware,
Lest those of friendship's grace he forfeit make.

Latin Inscription in the Villa Borghese.

'WHAT are you going to do with yourself to-day?' asked Count Clementi of his sister, who came into the room where he was turning over a French novel. She carried a bundle of pieces of black silk, which she threw down on the table, and began fitting together.

'I am busy,' she replied. 'I am going to Irene Mori presently — does that please you?'

'What is all that rubbish?' asked Clementi, taking no notice of the last part of her speech.

'Black silk.'

'I see that. Some valuable present from our aunt?'

Gemma shrugged her shoulders. 'To make a hood if there be enough — I must have it ready for to-night.'

'Going to Casa Olivetti? You were out this morning.'

'At mass, of course; it is St. Joseph's day, as you might know.'

'By the bye! So I have committed mortal sin by not being

up in time to go. And you brought home some good resolutions, I presume, for I think it was only yesterday that you protested you would never go out of the house again, unless you had a new dress.'

Gemma did not say what had changed her resolution; she merely asked, 'Any message to Vincenzo?'

'It is of no use for you to go now; Irene is gone out.'

'You have been up long enough to discover that.'

'Ravelli looked in and mentioned it.'

Gemma found she got the worst of this cut-and-thrust dialogue, and spoke no more till the contessa came in, and settled herself in the arm-chair which Clementi placed for her in a sunny position. Whatever were his faults, he was a most attentive son; and it was with reason that she complained of the difference between Gemma's conduct and his.

'What are you about, Gemma?' she asked, in the querulous tones which always exasperated her daughter, as if they contained a reproach.

'Making a hood.'

'So, after all, you are going with your aunt to-night; I am sure I don't know what you are to wear; that last dress is not paid for, and you had it a year ago.'

'There is no large party,' said Gemma.

'No, so I suppose; but I can't have you going not fit to be seen; bring me your dress, and let me look at it.'

'I have not time now,' said Gemma, and she left the room, and applied herself to the ironing of sundry collars and sleeves adorned with her own beautiful embroidery, the only ornamental kind of dress which the young countess could afford. Her mother never went into society, and was too poor to give entertainments; their visitors were only Gemma's two uncles (one of whom had married a wife with a good dowry, and lived in the rooms above the contessa's) and the Olivetti, very old acquaintances, who occasionally passed an evening with the contessa. Gemma's monotonous life was a little varied by going out with her aunt, but the pleasure was sadly diminished by the age of her dresses, especially when she compared them with Imelda's expensive toilettes; and she had seriously declared, only the

evening before, that she would go nowhere till she had a new gown, a thing which the family finances could by no means compass, as the richer uncle and aunt were deaf to her hints, and a stormy scene ensued, tears on her part, cool contempt on Clementi's, and lamentations on her mother's.

Early in the morning she might have been seen watering the two great orange-trees which stood in their tubs on either side of the door leading from Contessa Clementi's apartment into the corridor; the hollow trunk of one had often served as a post-office, and once more she found there a note from Ravelli, which told her that he should be at Casa Olivetti that evening. All else became unimportant; Gemma went gaily with her aunt to mass, and afterwards received from her sundry pieces of old silk to do what she liked with. She was happy again; she had a scheme to occupy her mind — better off so far than her brother, who had nothing particular on hand; the day would be too long, though as usual he had risen late.

He sauntered into the Corso with a cigar; met there a new acquaintance, a cousin of the Olivetti, who proposed a drive to celebrate the *festa* which enforced idleness on every one; encountered Ravelli, and invited him to join them, as they stepped into one of the carriages waiting on the stand. All three drove towards the Borghese Gardens, already thronged with pleasure seekers, who found shade in its ilex avenues, and sunshine on the open lawns, where children scrambled about, nurses carried white-robed babies, men smoked their cigars, loitered about, or sat on the stone benches; ladies walked up and down the grassy terraces, carriages stood empty waiting for their owners, or drove along the road to and from the villa — the band playing on the Pincio was distinctly heard, and the delicious day invited irresistibly to idleness — a day when spring and summer seemed married together, and the fruit trees strewed the bridal path with their snowy blossoms.

Meanwhile Gemma, as soon as Irene came in, sought her and found her reading the *Italia* of Leopardi to Vincenzo, who was copying the music of a part she was soon to rehearse. They did not look as if they wanted any one else, but Gemma sat down and began to talk of anything that came into her head.

Irene put away her book, and sat idle near the open window where the warm soft air came breathing in; Vincenzo looked at her with a smile and said, 'It is an unusual thing to see you idle, Irene.'

'Yes; I am giving myself a treat; I have been practising all the morning. I shall have to be very busy when the theatres re-open after Lent.'

'You never work,' said Gemma.

'I detest needlework; I like being very busy or very idle; and needlework is neither business nor idleness. Mrs. Dalzell is always doing some, but it is not my nature.'

'Maddalena does all your work for you,' said Gemma. Maddalena was Irene's servant.

'Yes; but I assure you I don't trust the planning of my costumes to her, she only executes my designs; you don't know how much dress has to do with success on the stage,' said Irene.

'What a dragon Maddalena looks!' said Gemma.

'That was one of her recommendations in Madama Cecchi's eyes,' said Vincenzo, 'when she urged us to have her for Irene's maid; she said to me, "*E brutta, brutta; cosi non farà l'amore!*"'

'She is one of my chief admirers,' said Irene; 'when I am practising she stands outside the door to listen, and won't let any one come in to interrupt me!'

'Irene, could you lend me some silk to work with? I have forgotten mine.'

'Here, take what you want. Your hood is nearly made!'

'If I had only something to line it with!'

'You want something rose-colored.'

Gemma made a face, which expressed that she had none, and was very unlikely ever to have any. 'I may as well let it alone; I cannot wear it without a lining.'

'I dare say I have some,' said Irene, searching in a drawer. 'Here.'

Gemma thanked her, and made such good use of the pieces offered to her, that the little hood soon became the prettiest headdress imaginable.

'Oh, Irene, did you see the Marchesa Viola's wreath the last time we were at the Valle? Anything so ridiculous! and she

was dressed in full gala costume. Every one was talking about it; and there was the Cavaliere Monteverdi with her again!'

'People talk of nothing but what such and such a one has worn,' said Irene; 'I sometimes wonder if all society be as satirical and gossiping and false as ours!'

'What would you have us talk of?'

'Why — I don't know — but surely in some places there must be a little talk about books, or art, or science, not merely whom one has seen, or what has happened lately, or what our friends wear, and whether their clothes came from Paris or not!'

'I never heard of any place where people talked of books instead of persons — it would be very dull. Now I have finished, all but the strings. Have you anything that would make strings, you dear, good Irene?'

'I don't know — come and look.'

Gemma sighed as she turned over the pieces of silk, the ribbons, the fragments, which careless Irene had heaped together and forgotten — there was so much that Gemma would gladly have appropriated. Strings at least she could secure, and when they were attached, the hood was ready for wear. While she was putting it on to display it, Mrs. Dalzell came in and proposed to Vincenzo a drive in the Borghese Gardens. He gladly accepted, declaring he could 'crutch' himself down-stairs unaided; Gemma looked so imploring that the invitation was extended to her, and she ran to fetch her bonnet, troubling herself no further about her mother's consent than to look in and say, 'Mamma, I am going *in carozza* with the English lady.'

Vincenzo laughingly observed to his sister, 'She got half her hood out of you — I know she came on purpose!'

'They must be wretchedly poor,' said Irene, 'or else it would be too mean — not that I grudge her the silk, if she would only ask outright.'

'And not imagine that she humbugs you with her sweet names! She has done the same thing fifty times before; they are too proud to let Clementi work, or Gemma marry a commoner, but not too proud to get all they can out of other people. They will not work, and are *not* ashamed to beg. I am not speaking of the count.'

At this moment Gemma came back, and they went down-stairs, accommodating their pace to Vincenzo's capabilities. The carriage stood waiting, with its handsome pair of horses and liveried servant; Gemma did not fail to notice the completeness of the equipage, and as she sat opposite to Mrs. Dalzell, her black eyes surveyed the Englishwoman's features and dress with an unflinching, curious scrutiny, as different as possible from the sincere, gladsome look of Irene. They drove out through the Piazza del Popolo, where the sun poured down dazzlingly on the white dusty ground, and illumined the buildings, till architecture that would have been mean, and streets that would have been gloomy elsewhere, became perfectly beautiful under the wand of that great enchanter the sun, who, like Happiness, calls out all that is lovely and beautifies even that which is not already fair. The obelisk rose up into as blue a sky as ever canopied it in its own Heliopolis; the lions spouted out clear streams of water at each corner of its stone steps with a refreshing sound; on the shadier side beggars lay basking and sleeping — extended, too, at full length on the steps of the church, which the Roman people raised to purify the site of the unholy sepulchre of Nero; boys hopped in all directions in the game of *campana*, or hop-scotch, without paying the slightest regard to the carriages which drove incessantly through the piazza, and threatened to annihilate them; bird-voices, rare sounds in Rome, twittered in the belt of cypresses; every one and everything seemed in a state of enjoyment.

Everybody eats fritters on St. Joseph's day, and at the corners of the streets, booths were erected, sheltered by arbors of green boughs, and sometimes adorned with broadsides of verses in large print that all the world might see; fritter-eaters crowded around them so fiercely eager that the white-robed cooks were breathless with frying, and handing their wares to the consumers. Being a *festa*, which happened not only to fall in Mid-Lent, but on a Friday, the Romans were doubly delighted to celebrate it, and not a carriage was to be seen on any of the stands — all were engaged by pleasure seekers.

There had been no rain for weeks, and Mrs. Dalzell and her party found the dust so disagreeable that they were very glad to

leave the carriage, and sit down among the ilexes. Irene applied herself to seeking wild flowers, Vincenzo lay on the turf, and Gemma began catechizing the English lady. Her restless spirit pined for change, as a traveller in the desert pines for water; out of Rome she saw novelty, liberty; English women appeared to her the most enviable creatures in the world; she never guessed that they seldom used their liberty in the way that she contemplated.

'The signora lives in London?' she began.

'No; in the country.'

'In summer — *in villeggiatura?*'

'All the year round when I am in England.'

'In a town in the country, then,' persisted Gemma, unable to understand that country society so peculiarly English, and consisting in great part of the families of a married priesthood.

'But you go to London for the carnival?'

'We have none in England.'

'No carnival!' said Gemma, incredulously; 'nor theatres?'

Her evidently declining estimation of England was raised again, when she heard there were theatres.

'And English ladies walk about alone, and marry whom they please, do they not? I have heard Signora Olivetti say that their parents trust girls in England, as if they were *figli maschi*' (male sons).

'They walk alone in the country, but no young girl goes out by herself in London, and a marriage against a parent's wish is rare. We trust girls because they are brought up not to abuse confidence.'

'Here no one trusts them, and in the convent they never can think for themselves; and when they come out, and have not the nuns always after them, they get into mischief,' said Gemma; a remark that hit the truth so nearly, that Mrs. Dalzell perceived that the girl had now, at all events, begun to think for herself, and besides had a keen wit. 'They have nothing that they care to do — some are satisfied to make their dresses and knit stockings by their mother's side, and some are so weary of their life that they would die outright, if they did not find something else to think of — pain or pleasure — either is a change; it makes

one's heart beat a little faster. There is at least one minute in the day to look for, to scheme for — that one feels mad to be deprived of — one lives thus!' Her face expressed such stormy passions as could be only known to a hot-blooded native of the south, as she described her own feelings under this thin disguise, little guessing that the English lady had the clue to each word. In the old times this girl would have been the heroine of some such terrible tragedy as the annals of almost every Italian family can furnish; the fiery, lawless nature still existed, the times only were altered; it was a wild beast, growing sullen and savage in a cage.

'See, signora,' said Irene, returning with a handful of delicate white star-like flowers which she had found under the ilexes. 'What are these?'

They were unknown both to Mrs. Dalzell and Vincenzo, who had begun to study botany a little, though much hindered by the lack of Italian works on the subject; and they examined them with an interest incomprehensible to Gemma, who rose and wandered away, enjoying the unwonted freedom. Mrs. Dalzell was so busy discussing the natural system with Vincenzo, that she did not notice the girl's absence, but Irene exclaiming, 'Where can she have gone? there will be a scandal if she be seen alone,' hastened to seek her.

But another eye saw her long before Irene could find her; Ravelli, as he sauntered with his two companions, caught sight of a well-known dress — the face was turned in another direction, yet it could be no other than Gemma, unlikely as it seemed that she should be wandering here alone. With some excuse to his friends he withdrew his arm from Clementi's, and crossed into the avenue slowly, so as to meet her when they had passed out of sight. The count, with his lynx eyes, saw her quite as soon as Ravelli, and a frown knit his finely marked, black brows together; but he saw without choosing to see, and continued his talk with Signor Lelio Olivetti, a cousin of Imelda's, just come to Rome for the express purpose of seeing a wife whom Signora Olivetti wrote to tell him she had found for him. A meeting with Ravelli, Gemma had not dared to hope for; but when she found he had been with her brother, her consternation was so

evident, that it again aroused the wonder of her lover. Her firm conviction that Clementi would sooner or later play her false made her ready at any moment to betray him; but the impossibility of explaining away her own long course of deceit again prevailed, and she let herself feel nothing but the joy of these few free moments, troubled very speedily, as it seemed, by the appearance of Irene, who came straight up to Gemma with no more notice of Ravelli than if she had never seen him before, and said briefly, 'We are going home.'

'Already!'

'Already? we have been here an hour at least. Come.'

'Not so much as a look for me, Irene?' said Ravelli, with mischievous pleasure at her evident indignation.

'I shall see you to-night at Casa Olivetti,' answered Irene, with meaning, and Gemma looked at her as if she could have killed her.

'*Au revoir*, hard-hearted one, then, unless you will let me come too,' said Ravelli.

Irene turned and looked at him with eyes full of indignant reproach.

'Luigi!' she exclaimed, 'once for all, I must say it — how can you act so basely? Do you know that I am sometimes ready to renounce you as a friend! If you love Gemma, tell the world so, and take the consequences; but do not risk her fair name and Imelda's happiness any longer.'

'As the consequences would be the cloister for Gemma, I can hardly take your advice, Irene.'

'Then wait, without such meetings as this.'

'Why? do you suppose I knew she would be here?'

'It is only one of many; is not that true, Luigi?'

'Come,' said Gemma, whose impatience now brimmed over, 'it is you who linger now — come!' She caught Irene's hand to hasten her on; but Ravelli was stung by her look and words, and said, haughtily, 'One minute, Irene. Gemma is dependent on her uncle; perhaps you will ask his consent for us! You need not suppose it is on my own account that I keep our love secret; you ought to know what persecution would come on her if he heard of it, but the day will come when she shall be inde-

pendent of Monsignore Clementi. If you suppose that we prefer such meetings as these to being openly affianced, you are much mistaken.'

'Perhaps Gemma likes them better than you do, Luigi,' said Irene; and the words struck home, for Gemma did, by nature, love anything that required plotting or scheming.

'Come!' Gemma exclaimed. flushing scarlet, and hurrying on. Irene had no more to say, and followed her. As they got out of sight of Ravelli, who stood still in an attitude of despondency most unusual to him, Gemma whispered, in a tone of such intense hatred that Irene started, 'I thank you — I shall not forget this, Mademoiselle Mori!'

Ravelli's feelings were not soothing. No man could like a woman to despise him, and he had a deep esteem and admiration for Leone's betrothed bride. He loved Gemma passionately, yet he doubted her, he could not esteem her; but still, to have a glimpse of her, to exchange a look — a word — was the absorbing thought of each day. He could not have told why. He knew perfectly that Irene was a thousand times superior; that Imelda would make him a better wife, but he loved Gemma. There was no why or wherefore — it was the fact. He did not greatly fear Count Clementi's aristocratic prejudices, but he knew the uncle would end the matter at once should it come to his ears; and as for his own father, Signor Ravelli, Luigi had been already driven nearly mad with irritation at his obstinate determination, that the long-arranged marriage between his son and Imelda Olivetti should take place. Nothing but his mother's terrified, tearful face, her misery after similar scenes, prevented Luigi from making some outrageous reply; but he knew himself, after all, to be as much the idol of his old father as of his mother, and, in every calmer moment, reproached himself for refusing to make them happy. Some time before, he would have married the pretty child they had chosen for him, and been contented; he had always made a pet of her, and liked her in a brotherly way, which might easily have glided into a husband's affection; but at Casa Olivetti he met Gemma, he saw her frequently with Irene, and feelings awoke which were very dissimilar to his calm liking for Imelda. Now, if he would, he could not marry, for Gemma

responded to his love with the unbounded ardor of her violent nature; he had linked his fate to hers, and could not disentangle them. His lips were compressed, his brow darkened, as he stood meditating; but, speedily, his usual gay, mocking smile returned, he was Luigi Ravelli again; a fire-fly, defying fate and enjoying the battle; something of a weathercock by nature, but withal thoroughly affectionate, generous, and manly; and the best of the club who met to play at *pallone* in Palazzo Barbarini on summer evenings, a distinction which proved that he had not his match in Rome for speed of foot, lightness of step, and quickness of eye.

He perceived his friends on the main road, and joining them, all sauntered on, till, in a little thicket, where the ground was colored by purple anemones and blue periwinkles in rich mosaic, they beheld a Decameron-like group — Mrs. Dalzell and her companions seated or lying on the turf, luxuriating in the enchanting day, when every breath inhaled air suffused with sunshine. They had not yet quite made up their minds to go, and the arrival of the young men gave an excuse for lingering another half-hour.

Count Clementi introduced his new acquaintance, and some exchange of compliments and trifling talk ensued. Irene alone sat silent, enjoying the soft, enervating day, but thinking, at the same time, of Imelda. Clementi sat near her, and made an occasional remark, chiming in with her mood, but keeping, unobserved, an eye on his sister and Ravelli, who had just answered Vincenzo's question, why he had not visited them the evening before, that he and Leone had been discussing a scheme, with some others, for a *circolo* or club.

Gemma's face clouded. When she had contrived that night to slip in on purpose to meet him, he had stayed away to flirt with her sworn rival, politics! She entered at once into conversation with Lelio Olivetti, who began with, 'I have heard of you repeatedly, contessa, though this is the first time I have seen Rome.'

'And what do you think of our Rome, signor?'

'How shall I tell you what I think of it! I stand on the bridges, and admire the views like a foreigner!'

From sentiment they got to satire; Gemma was in a wicked mood, and spared none of her acquaintance. Mrs. Dalzell, singularly as she had been thrown into foreign society, did not know enough of it to understand the allusions which called forth repeated peals of laughter from the two chief talkers; but she saw by the curl on Vincenzo's lip what he thought of the conversation, and began to wonder if she were doing right to allow the young lady to make this new acquaintance. Uncertain of Roman customs, she would have been uneasy, had not the presence of Count Clementi reassured her. He was saying to Irene, 'How you must be looking forward to *villeggiatura!*'

'Yes; but I shall have some hard work first. Did I tell you that we are to have a new opera, with an old Roman story for the plot — *Il Caio* is the name, and I believe I am to be the heroine, Valeria. I don't know its merits yet. When we do leave Rome, I hope we shall go to some new place; Frascati and Albano have become places where people only go to show their fine clothes.'

'They save all the year round to make a show in *villeggiatura*, just as the poor put away a *bajocco* or two a week for the October feasts, and then hey! for drives, and new dresses, and peacocks' feathers in the hats, and a feast at some little inn outside the walls!'

'Well, are they not wise? Mankind must have something to look forward to — a laurel crown or an October feast, it does not matter which!'

'They both occasion headaches very often,' said Vincenzo; 'but the laurels last longer.'

'Than the headaches, or the feast? This is a day when roses seem more appropriate than laurels — '*la parure à l'hiver, mais le deuil de l'été*,' you know!'

'If I had the making of the wreath, it should be both mixed — the summer should have its laurels, and the winter its roses,' replied Clementi, in a tone of such real interest, that the words were not complimentary but sympathetic, and Irene smiled gratefully. He had a bit of bay in his hand, and springing lightly up, he gathered a handful of sprays from several trees near, and twisted them into a garland. 'See, Vincenzo, my friend,' said

he, playfully, 'my wreath will be more enduring than your wild flowers. Offer your bouquet to Flora — mine is for the Priestess of Apollo.'

'Cypress!' said Vincenzo; 'are you crowning her with cypress?'

'No, no; lignum vitæ.'

'Nay, it is cypress,' said Irene; 'never mind, I am not afraid.'

'Don't put it on,' said Clementi, hastily. 'A cypress crown! the first thing I ever gave you!'

'Only a very little bit, and a great deal of bay to counteract it. Let me have it.'

'No,' said Clementi, untwisting the wreath, and throwing away the sprays. A little gust of warm wind bore them back to Irene, who exclaimed, as she took up the ill-omened bough, 'After all, it has come back to me! See, count!' She looked the personification of glad fearlessness as she spoke, holding the cypress bough above her head, her mirthful mood entirely restored by the evident seriousness with which Clementi regarded the omen. He broke to pieces a branch which had fallen near him, thinking how true the omen might be — one created only by his own conscience, and thus, indeed, prophetic.

'Are there laurels in the world to suffice both you and Leone, Irene?' asked Ravelli, breaking off a conversation with Mrs. Dalzell, during which his eye constantly sought Gemma, who was entirely engrossed with her new acquaintance.

'Our laurels grow on different trees, Luigi, and his are higher and more evergreen than mine.'

'Why is he not here? we only want him to complete our party,' said Count Clementi.

'It was a sudden plan of Mrs. Dalzell's; Gemma was with us, and we all came together,' said Vincenzo. 'The sun was so dazzling in the piazzas that the only thing to look at comfortably was one's own shadow. I fully comprehend the force of the Arabian wish, "May your shadow never be less."'

'We shall have to fly into the country as soon as we can,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'You think of remaining amongst us all the year, signora?

Irene will succeed in persuading you to live altogether in Italy at last,' said Clementi.

'No; I have too many friends in England; but I confess that Italy attracts me every autumn, as if I were a migratory bird.'

'The swallows have not such good taste,' said Vincenzo; 'in autumn you may see them clustering about Sta. Maria del Popolo by hundreds, and then, off they go.'

'*San Benedetto, rondina sotto'l tetto;* I see they are come,' said Irene.

'Sing *Pellegrina Rondinella*, Irene,' said Clementi, humming the first lines of Grossi's lovely verses, in a voice so sweet and rich, that Mrs. Dalzell at once perceived why Madame Marriotti preferred him to Leone. Irene complied, and he sang a second by ear, and the passers-by stopped with one accord, taking off their hats as it concluded, with a murmur of '*Bravi! Bravi!*'

'They have found you out, Irene,' said Ravelli. 'By the bye, did Leone turn poet on purpose to write songs for you? I have always intended to ask him.'

'You know very well that his poems were famous long before he ever saw us,' she answered, provoked just as he meant her to be.

'I shall break with him soon, I foresee,' said Ravelli, between jest and earnest; 'he has more power than any man in Rome over the people, and the villain uses it to promote his confounded half measures, moderation, peace, and such stuff. There is nothing so peaceful as death; we have lain in the tomb for ages — ay, like the poor wretches whom Dante saw in their open sepulchres with a shower of burning snow falling on them; if life return to us, it must be in struggles and suffering. What are we good for, but to fight for our country — live or die for her, as she needs us? Moderation, while the Austrian stands on our soil? *Viva l'Italia!*'

'*E fuori i Barbari!* But no more politics to-day, Luigi,' said Clementi, perceiving that Signor Lelio was suddenly regarding them with a stare of offended amazement; 'can't you talk of something else on a summer's day?'

'Oh, to be sure,' said Ravelli, flinging himself back on the turf; 'by all means; let us talk of violets, and lambs, and brooks,

if you like; no doubt there is much which is profitable to say about them.'

'Or suppose we go home,' said Mrs. Dalzell. 'Are you ready, signorina?'

'Quite,' answered Gemma, rising; and they all walked together towards the carriage.

'I shall see you to-night at my cousin's, contessina?' asked Olivetti, who kept by her side.

'Yes; unless my aunt changes her mind as to going. *A rivederla*, signor.'

She sprang into the carriage, and held out a hand to Vincenzo, but Irene looked on waiting upon him as her special right, and speedily arranged his cushions and helped him in; Mrs. Dalzell followed, the carriage drove away, the young men walked on towards their own, which was at some distance, Olivetti exclaiming, 'Count, often as I have heard of your sister's beauty from my cousin, I was still unprepared for it — what is her name?'

'Gemma,' replied Clementi, carelessly, while Ravelli looked daggers at this new rival, who continued to express his admiration, and asked if she were yet betrothed. Ravelli looked sharply at the count, whose simple negative was not all he had hoped for. A beggar boy had been following and persecuting them for some minutes, his dolorous whine much interfering with the eloquence of Signor Olivetti, who repulsed him in vain, then suddenly lost patience, and struck him. The boy staggered, but recovered himself with an imprecation, 'May you die of a *Pratiolo*.' he cried, as he stood glaring after the young man, who had walked on laughing. The lad took no notice of a silver coin which one of those who had seen the brutal act tossed to him, but in a minute or two sprang into a side avenue, and followed Olivetti and his companions. Clementi remarked coolly, 'Rash, my friend; we have stilettoes here.'

'If all the *canaglia* of Rome wore stilettoes, it is the same to me,' answered Olivetti, disdainfully.

'Before the signor has been here many days, he will learn that the *canaglia* are not to be trampled on,' said Ravelli, flushed to the temples, and half choked with indignation; 'I shall see you again to-night, count,' and he walked rapidly away without greeting of any sort to Olivetti, who said,

'A friend of yours, count? he seems to love the rabble strangely.'

'Dear signor, is that wonderful in days when King Mob rules?' asked Clementi, with his quiet smile. 'When the new monarch's affairs become out of order, we shall see how many adherents he retains.'

'I conclude he is a plebeian, this Signor Ravelli; but is it possible that you, a noble, have adopted these republican opinions?' asked Olivetti, whose wealth would have enriched a dozen such counts as Clementi, but who labored under a desire to buy the title which birth had denied to him, and was a more rigid aristocrat than the far-descended Roman nobles themselves.

'It is so. You have heard little of Roman politics, signor, if you know nothing of Ravelli!'

'I have heard of him as a turbulent, seditious man, and I regret profoundly that my family are to be connected with him. He is not noble; but you, count, I cannot conceive that you really take the side of the mob — you, the head of so old a family?'

And Clementi found it harder to convince the *parvenu* of his sincerity, than to deceive all the liberals put together. He inwardly muttered a malediction on his obstinacy, and reflected what unpleasant doubts such talk might awaken among the Bianchi if it should ever come to their ears. Resolved to stop him, he said at last, 'I am so little of an aristocrat, that I would give my sister to a commoner did it depend on me.'

'On whom, then, does it depend? Are not you the head of the family?'

'My uncle, Monsignore Clementi, is her guardian, and his prejudices are invincible.'

Signor Olivetti's admiration of aristocratic sentiments received a rude shock, but he had acquired the certainty that Clementi would not oppose his wishes. The new friends vied with one another in their expressions of affection as they parted, though each party well knew this warmth to be only assumed out of politeness.

In the evening they met again at Signor Olivetti's house, where Irene, the Ravelli family, Gemma and her uncle and

aunt, formed the rest of the *societa*. The ladies all wore dark morning dresses; there was no attempt to beautify the room. For some time the gentlemen talked together, and the ladies did the same, exchanging confidences and condolences on the delinquencies of their servants, or discussing the last sermon at the *Gesu*, and inquiring what had been given out as the subject of the next. Imelda was happy in having Irene with her, but unconsciously shrank a little from Gemma, who, still burning with anger against both Irene and Ravelli, revenged herself on the latter by speedily engaging Lelio Olivetti in a lively conversation. Her aunt scarcely attended to her proceedings, and her uncle thought them his wife's affair. Clementi presently left the elder gentlemen, and discussed the new opera with Irene; and Ravelli, stung by Gemma's conduct, seated himself by his betrothed, to the visible satisfaction of his father and mother, the latter of whom turned a thankful look to him, believing these attentions to be paid entirely for her sake. He smiled as he met his mother's eye, and Imelda's heart beat with frightened joy that made her hardly able to answer his questions — questions put after all with the patronizing yet affectionate manner of a young man towards a pet child. Imelda never did herself justice with Luigi; she would have got on much better had she been more indifferent to him; she was too anxious to be worthy of his notice, too much afraid of his thinking her silly, to be at ease with him; there was always a kind of strain on her mind when she talked to him. It might have been otherwise had she ever been alone with him, or had she been educated so as to be at home in the subjects which interested him. But whether he liked it or not, he could hardly help knowing what he was to her, and this knowledge usually made him keep aloof without asking himself why. There was sometimes, however, a sort of pleasure in knowing that it was his presence which brightened that young face, and the conversation begun by him in pure irritation lasted till all the party were called to play at *Tombola*, a kind of 'lottery tickets,' as an old-fashioned game of cards was once called in England. Pauls were now rapidly won and lost, and the noise and excitement waxed so great, that the elder Signor Olivetti exclaimed, 'Hush — hush, scandalous people! it is Lent!'

'No, not to-day, not to-day,' cried several voices in reply, 'it is *Pianeta rossa* to-day!' implying by this that the priests had said mass in the red robe which marks a festival, and that therefore Lent was suspended.

'Let the children enjoy themselves,' said his wife; 'we shall not have another game for ages; I am going into retreat after Easter.'

'Where is it to be? Oh, I know you always go to the same place every year; I shall be at the *Sagro Cuore* this year,' said Signora Ravelli; and remarks on this exclusion from the world, the preparation for Easter and Whitsuntide, mingled with the shrieks of delight as fortune favored or frowned on the players.

Ravelli still sat by Imelda, but his eyes turned frequently to Gemma, whose face, to eyes that could read her expression, betrayed jealous uneasiness, though she still seemed engrossed by her game and by Signor Lelio.

Signora Olivetti had her reasons for wishing that Gemma were married; she had long prepared her cousin Lelio to admire the young contessina, and had now induced her husband to arrange this party expressly for the sake of bringing about a meeting. The interview in the Borghese Gardens had been better luck than she could have hoped; Lelio was as anxious as could be wished to secure so handsome a wife; especially as though dowerless, she was noble. All on his side was so satisfactory, that the next day Signora Olivetti paid a diplomatic visit to Contessa Clementi, who rose to meet her with tender embraces, which were returned with equal warmth, while mutual amicable reproaches were exchanged for the length of time that had elapsed since they met.

'Sit down, *cara*,' said the contessa, throwing an indescribable amount of caressing politeness into the simple words, and using the familiar *tu*. Though they were acquaintances of thirty years' standing, Signora Olivetti replied with '*voi*,' less formal than '*ella*,' but more respectful than the second person singular. The contessa called the visitor by her Christian name, but the title was used in return; for the poverty-stricken Clementi were noble, and the rich commoner was far beneath them.

'Excuse my not having visited you, dear Gigia,' said the

contessa, sinking into her chair again, and observing every minute particular of her visitor's dress as she spoke. 'I go nowhere — I cannot even get to mass now; I was obliged to get a dispensation from fasting this Lent; my doctor said it would have killed me. But you — you never come near me! I am so happy to see you, it is life to me.'

'It is the greatest pleasure in the world to me, dearest contessa; I must thank you too for letting Gemma come to me last night. Did she tell you what a conquest she made of my cousin? Ah, naughty girl! your mamma knows nothing about it!'

'No, she never tells me anything. Why have you not brought Imelda? When is she to be married? I heard it was to be at Easter.'

'I cannot spare her yet; I must keep her a little longer if Luigi will let me: but you know we mothers must not be unreasonable, and he grows impatient. This autumn I suppose I must let her go. And when is Gemma to marry?'

'Ah, my dear Gigia, you know she might have been married long ago — that excellent marchese —'

'Well, she will be wiser next time; will you not, Gemma? Suppose I knew of a good match — an admirable young man — the best of characters — rich — rich as Plutus!'

'Noble?' inquired the contessa.

'No, but of a good family; you cannot have everything, *contessa mia!* He would live in Rome if you positively desired it; but his house — his estate — a paradise, I assure you. No one need wish to live elsewhere. She would have an establishment like a princess.'

'I am afraid my brother-in-law would not consent,' said the contessa, doubtfully.

'Monsignore Clementi will hear reason. A young man who does not so much as ask if she has a dowry!'

'Ah! that is much!' sighed Contessa Clementi. 'What is his name — this cousin of Signor Olivetti?'

'Yes — I know his whole history; no debts, no affairs of the heart, an immense property in the Marches — only one fault, he is an enraged *Papista!* Do not fail to tell monsignore this, contessa. I do not mind telling you his name. I should wish

everything to be open and candid — Lelio Benedetto Mariano Olivetti. What did you think of him, my dear little Gemma?'

'I can't tell yet; I have only seen him twice.'

'But one knows immediately in these matters, *carina;* it is the impression on the heart by which we must judge; character will come by and bye.'

'I think he is too much of a courtier.'

'There it is! — how often I have said, "*Lelio mio*, speak sincerely; put sincerity into your manner; these polite ways may please a foreigner, but no Roman girl will ever marry you!" But I do assure you he is an angel, an angel, my dear child.'

'He wants an immediate answer, I suppose,' said the contessa, looking apprehensively at her daughter; 'I don't know — I must consult monsignore and my son — I can't say — '

'He will wait, he will wait a reasonable time, contessa; I know you have some difficulty with monsignore at present, but I have great hopes. I trust that Lelio's politics will not make your son his enemy? Meanwhile this darling will consider the matter; is it not so, Gemma?'

'I must have a week at least then,' said Gemma; 'I do not believe I can love him, and I shall make a prayer to be assisted to decide. I cannot consent unless I feel that it is Heaven's will, dear signora.'

'There is a sweet child! See how good and pious she is, contessa! I know how she will decide, and I hope monsignore will be favorable to Lelio too. Now I must return; he is dying to know the result of my visit. Good-bye, good-bye, dearest contessa — good-bye, my Gemma.'

New embraces followed before Signora Olivetti, in her splendid dress, swept out of the room.

'What ostentation! what vulgarity to wear such velvet as that! Merely to show she is rich! That is the only way these commoners can try to equal us,' said Contessa Clementi. 'She is intolerable; but if this cousin is really such a good match, we must think about him, Gemma.'

CHAPTER XVI.

Non piace a lei che innumerabil turba,
Viva in alto di fuor, morta di dentro,
Le applauda a casa, e mano a man percuota;
Ne si rallegra de le rozze voci.
Volgano a lei quelle infiniti lodi —
— Ma la possanza del divino ingegno
Vita di dentro.

'THERE is only one thing that I wish, Vincenzo' — said Mrs. Dalzell, concluding a long conversation, concerning the prospects of Nota and Irene, 'that he were a Protestant; the more I see of Romanism, the more I shrink from it. I half hoped that studying and talking with you might win him over.'

'You forget how greatly my superior he is, dear Mrs. Dalzell, and besides we never touch on that subject. You don't know how dangerous for us both it would be, though, for that matter, we have discussed things more perilous before now.'

'Dangerous?'

'Yes; there are severe laws against spreading Protestant opinions. If you belong to a nation that can take care of you, such as England or France, you will only be expelled by the police; but if you are an Italian, or say a Swiss, or a Swede, then you will, as sure as fate, see the inside of the Inquisition.'

'The Inquisition, in these days! is not that a figment of the anti-papist faction?'

'On my honor, it is not. I don't say that torture is used now; but I know, for a fact, that now, at this moment, the prisons near the Vatican are used for all heretics or priests whom the Holy Tribunal sees fit to imprison; and all Romanists are *bound* to denounce a Protestant who attempts to convert them. But

the real reason why I never argue on religion with Leone is, that I know it would be useless; he has the entire, childlike belief that one often finds here, where there is faith at all.'

'It is strange, Vincenzo!'

'It is; I see more how strange since I have studied the subject, as I really have tried to do. You see that, in some incomprehensible way, the most learned men believe they can reconcile the Church of Rome's present claims with antiquity. Padre Rinaldi does so, for instance. I know, however, that there is not quite as much unity among them as they wish us to believe; they differ as to the amount of worship to be paid to images, and modern perverts go infinitely further than those bred and born in the Roman Communion. I don't pretend to comprehend how, in an infallible Church, there can be differences of opinion, or how men can limit their belief; but I know that Leone and a few others hold that, if Protestants are fully persuaded they are in the right, then they are in the Catholic Church; but most would say there is no hope of salvation for a heretic.'

'Like the old beggar whom I heard saying yesterday, as poor Mr. Domville's funeral passed by, "Why make such a fuss for a heretic, who must belong to the evil one!" You don't think Leone would wish to convert Irene?'

'Oh no, and, unlike most Romanists, he knows a good deal about the Church of England; but still it is sad when husband and wife cannot worship together. I wish from my heart that he belonged to us.'

'You are not one of those who think the spirit everything, and the form nothing, Vincenzo.'

'No man could live here, and think so,' he replied, with emphasis; 'I believe our form of prayer has saved England from the unbelief of the Germans.'

'It is a blessing that many would readily take from us. I notice that, with all Leone's bitter feeling towards the priests (Madama Cecchi the same), they both reverence the priest's office.'

'He looks on the office as entirely holy and distinct; a bad priest cannot destroy the holiness of his profession, any more than a bad Levite could. You see, the reason Madama Cecchi

and others abhor the priests in general is, that they look on them as spies. If the police want information, they go to the priests, who are bound to be able to give it, using the confessional as their engine, and some wretched old women as spies on the parish. Perhaps you don't know why poor old Nanna was so unpopular; she always confessed to the parish priest, and doubtless reported to him all that went on in the palace. I dreaded her more than I can tell you, when we were deep in conspiracy, and hundreds of lives depended on our prudence.'

'Nanna would surely never have betrayed or injured you?'

'I cannot tell, if superstition had come into play; and certainly in a deathbed confession she would. You little know the net of espionage thrown over Rome!'

'Will you tell me what you hoped for from all the risk you ran?'

'To counteract the Sanfedists and the Austrian influence, and have a strong party ready to carry out reforms when the right time came. There was compensation for all our harass and peril, in knowing what a gallant set of men there were ready to risk everything for Italy, even when all patriotism appeared to be crushed out. But now, half their heads seem turned; and, while they exalt Nota to the skies, they act on Cecchi's doctrine — not that he is much of a leader, he is too silent and undemonstrative to make much show; but he and those like him are dangerous men, and I don't know that Ravelli is much better, though he only preaches wild doctrines, because he is a mad, headstrong fellow, who enjoys uproar and danger; not that he has any personal grudge against Government; and, somehow, the more provoking and unreasonable he is, the better I like him! It would take half the day to count up his freaks. I always believed that he knew, from the best authority, who chalked up, on the door of the Austrian Embassy's Palace, "*Fuori i barbari!*"'

'Leone once said he was like the wind, equally unstable and equally violent,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'There is a spirit and fun in him, that somehow one can't help being taken with it,' said Vincenzo, smiling at many old recollections; 'and yet he has often thoroughly exasperated me.'

'To return to Leone,' said Mrs. Dalzell, 'whom I like more

the more I see of him. I wish he and Irene could marry; I am rather an advocate for early marriages.'

'We are very happy as we are,' said Vincenzo. 'I don't think a little waiting matters.'

'Would they say the same?'

'Well, I am not quite so sure, and after all I wish nearly as much to have Leone for a brother as he can to have Irene for a wife. No one can guess what he has been to me.'

'Vincenzo,' said Mrs. Dalzell, 'let me ask this once — are you happy now?'

His pale face flushed. 'Yes, signora, I am happy,' he answered, in a deep, low tone, and with a look that seemed to gaze far away. 'Yes, I have learnt at last, that sickness may be a vocation, as well as labor — and I have had so much to make it easy to me.'

He had once wrung her heart by the anguish that his despair had re-awakened there; but she received double recompense, as she felt that her words at that time had been a prophecy. Vincenzo had conquered in a battle where stronger men might have sunk down and perished, and the reward was a peace which none should ever take away. Mrs. Dalzell bent down and kissed him, as if he had been the lost son for whose sake she had first loved him. That love of hers was one of the things to which Vincenzo alluded when he spoke of some things that had lightened his trials, but truly the orphans had well repaid her for her kindness. She knew that many of her friends, especially at Rome, had commented on her conduct towards them, had even blamed her; but she was accountable to no one; she said all that was necessary to such as had any right to question her, and let the rest of the world make a nine-days' wonder of the matter if it liked. One or two knew that the orphan brother and sister had come into her hands, when something to love was a true Godsend to her. The old saying, so fittingly expressed by Schiller, applied in this case as in many others.

> 'A millstone and the human heart go ever round and round;
> If they have nothing else to grind, themselves they must be ground.'

Her friends had grown accustomed to the affair and speculated

no longer about it; indeed she began to derive credit from having patronized so promising a cantatrice as Mademoiselle Mori: but some of her acquaintance could still torment her a little when an opportunity occurred, as she found when, after her conversation with Vincenzo was over, she walked to one of the libraries in the Piazza di Spagna, to see by the arrival book whether a friend had yet reached Rome. As usual, the shop was nearly full of idlers, some looking at a portfolio of photographs, others examining the books, or speaking to the courteous librarian, others looking at the list of ceremonies to see what was going on that week. Disconnected sentences in English and German crossed and re-crossed in all directions; here two Englishmen were conversing, one looking up like a cock-sparrow at the other, a tall, fresh-colored Oxford giant, who dolefully complained that 'Rome was so slow.'

'Why, when I saw you last you were going to set up a boat on the Tiber!' responded his little friend.

'Couldn't be done. I don't know what on earth to do with myself to-day; Travers has been to the place where the pigs are killed, but he says it's a beastly sight.'

'You should do like me, try a tour in the Campagna — beds uncommon hard, fare not so bad — good for your constitution.'

The treble of female voices entering drowned the rest. A blooming, red-haired girl was saying to her companions, 'Oh, I am half dead with sight-seeing; we kept it all for Lent, for really we had no energy for it when we were going to two or three parties every night.'

'Well, I am glad to have seen Rome, certainly, but I shall be so thankful to go away.'

'Off to Naples?' floated across from another group; 'you come back for Holy Week?'

'Service at San Luigi, four p. m.; write that down, Louisa.'

'Oh, mamma, I am so anxious to hear Père Vaudreuil preach; I wonder if we could get introduced to Mrs. Mayor; she has a private chapel in her house, and —'

Mrs. Dalzell listened with amusement as she looked down the pages of the arrival book undisturbed, till two of her acquaintances came in, the lady with whom she had driven on the Pincian

Hill the first Sunday that she had noticed Vincenzo, the other a gentleman whose face betrayed so sarcastic a nature, that his address, 'Pray how are your orphans?' seemed a satire, simple as it was.

'I thought you were gone to Naples,' replied Mrs. Dalzell.

'No, I leave that to people who wish to observe Lent strictly. I hope your *protégés* are flourishing?'

'Very, thank you; and I hope you kept your word, and went to see Mademoiselle Mori on Tuesday night.'

'I did, and I think you are a bold woman to have anything to do with so admirable an actress.'

'Mr. Thornton maintains that no girl could enter so entirely into the feelings of *Adelaide* without having experienced them,' said the other lady.

'I hope Mr. Thornton will not whisper calumny to support his theory, which is otherwise quite untenable,' said Mrs. Dalzell, not quite as calmly as usual.

'I don't dispute the fact of Mademoiselle Mori being a prodigy of virtue as well as talent,' said Mr. Thornton. 'No doubt actresses are very different here from what they are in England —I only say you are a bold woman.'

'Mademoiselle Mori is a cantatrice,' said Mrs. Dalzell, 'and you ought to know how much higher her profession ranks here than that of the "prose actresses."'

'Oh, my dear, it is only a part of his systematical disbelief in everything good,' said the second lady; 'all the world knows that mademoiselle is as good as she is clever. There is no society into which she is not received, and I hear that her brother is such an interesting person. I confess that I did tremble for you at first, especially when I heard that your Irene was to be a cantatrice; but you were wiser than we.'

'If Mr. Thornton deserved it, I would introduce him to Signor Mori and his sister,' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'but with him not even seeing is believing where goodness is concerned.'

Mr. Thornton made her a half-mocking bow as she shook hands and left the library. 'An extraordinary freak, certainly!' said he; 'and yet she is a sensible woman, and not romantic.'

'Oh yes, she is indeed; you don't know her,' said his com-

panion, laughingly; 'she absolutely believes in truth, and honor, and gratitude — obsolete virtues, which wise people like you and me know no longer exist, if they ever did; and strange to say, nothing ever occurs to show her what a sad delusion she is laboring under!'

'She must find this charitable whim rather expensive!'

'No, you are wrong again; I know as a fact that this brother and sister have entirely maintained themselves for some time, and Mademoiselle Mori has already made her profession honored here; if you sneered at it in Roman society, the *habitués* would quote her directly against you. The cantatrices have always been tolerably well spoken of, and she has given a sort of credit to them all; I know from many facts that she is as noble a creature as ever existed. Now you may believe me, for you know very well that I am not much given to crediting goodness in any one.'

Before Mrs. Dalzell came in again, Irene returned from rehearsal, looking weary and vexed. Vincenzo was at the window, trimming his plants and making friendly signs to Velvet Cap over the way; but he turned round as she opened the door, with a face of welcome. She smiled in answer, but her countenance was clouded still.

'The rehearsal has not gone smoothly? Madame St. Simon out of humor?' asked Vincenzo.

'As usual. We have been rehearsing for three hours, and I am quite tired,' said Irene, sitting down wearily. 'She will not appear in the *Caio*, half out of spite to me, half because Marchese Cortona is sure to be offended by the new opera. She appeared — pretended to be too ill to sing, but was not too ill to set all the company quarrelling. At last Signor Mattei settled that Emilia Orioli takes her part, I am *Valeria*, Sanzio is *Virginio*, Varchi is *Caio*. The disputes, the vile, mean motives that degrade everything, even music! malice and jealousy and party spirit — I feel as if I hated it all after such a morning as this!'

'It is the prosaic side of your art, dear Irene.'

'Oh, it is all vanity and vexation — all! When I think of what music should be — of what I have in my mind, and how utterly mean, how despicable my best attempts to express it are

— Vincenzo, I am ready never to act again! It is here — in my mind — I have glorious visions here; but oh, it is all failure when I try to give them form. I despise myself, and those who applaud me — I can do nothing — nothing!'

'You would do nothing worth doing assuredly, if you did reach your own ideal. That ought to be too high to be ever attained,' said Vincenzo.

'And then,' continued Irene, who was visibly despondent and excited, 'if I were a true artist, should I care as I do for applause not worth having? I could not act without it — I should be cold, uninspired — .'

'My dear, you know nothing about it. It is not the mere applause; it is the sympathy, the consciousness of power over the feelings of others, that inspires you, not the plaudits of a crowd. What artist does not feel the same!' And then, as Irene sighed wearily, he added, 'You, and all who have stolen a spark of heavenly fire, must take the penalty with it, my dear Prometheus. Come, you want something to sober you — one of Madame Marriotti's musical *soirées*.'

'Ah! this is her evening! that will be thorough refreshment. I wonder if we shall all be there to-night. Madame Marriotti has picked up another *alto*, a nice middle-aged Miss Grahame; she walked home from church yesterday with Mrs. Dalzell and me. I think it is pleasant to know some English.'

'Shall you go on practising that piece of Scarlatti's to-night?'

'Most likely, and a madrigal of Felice Anerio's. There certainly is some attraction about Madame Marriotti, which brings all musicians to her house. Vincenzino, is it quite impossible that you should go there to-night? I want you to hear us perform.'

He shook his head. 'My powers of locomotion don't increase. Besides, I have had pleasure enough for one day.'

'What is it?'

'A visitor. A Sir Arthur Laurie, who had heard of my carvings, and came to find me out — and why do you think? He has one of our father's paintings, and wanted to make out if I were the same Mori. I wish you had been in doors that you might have heard how pleasantly he told me how he was delighted with it at the Royal Academy years ago, and bought it.

He always intended to look for the artist if ever he came to Rome; and having come at last, he inquired after him, but nobody could give him any information; they thought he must mean me, and said there was a Mori who carved, but did not paint.'

'Ah, I suppose that here papa was only one amongst the hundreds of painters; but I never see any pictures like his. If we could but find any of those we were forced to sell!'

'He is remembered in England, however; and Sir Arthur said that if we ever go to England, we must visit him in his house in Northumberland, and see the painting.'

'That is pleasant, dear Vincenzo —.'

'Il signor ——' announced Carmela, looking in, and leaving the visitor waiting in the ante-room.

'Oh, Carmela, do remember to ask visitors in at once — who is it? *Favorisca, signor.* Ah! Signor Sanzio.'

'Good morning,' said Vincenzo, holding out his hand cordially to the chief bass singer at Irene's theatre, who being an old friend, on the strength of it presently observed to Irene, 'So, signorina, I am glad to see that brow of yours rather smoother than when I had the pleasure of rehearsing with you.'

'Oh, I am quite amiable now, signor; but who could have been calm this morning in such a storm of cross purposes? Signor Mattei in despair, Madame St. Simon in open rebellion, all the rest insubordinate.'

'Mademoiselle Mori included. I have been advising our manager to change the opera, but ——'

'Change the opera!' cried Irene; 'let the others triumph! — not for a moment!'

'You are disinterested, signorina, for I never heard you in a part less suited to you. You know this new thing that we are all at sixes and sevens about, Signor Mori? A folly got up for the present time; an ancient Roman story to fit modern Roman times, liberty, fraternity, &c. *Va bene* — I dare say your sister has told you all the ins and outs. For my part I think the opera had better keep clear of politics; we are only running ourselves into *imbroglios*, but that I leave to Signor Mattei. However, I must say that the part of *Valeria* is quite unworthy of your sister — she will never make anything of it.'

'Indeed!' said Irene, with a little scorn; 'wait and see, signor.'

She sat down to the piano and commenced the first solo in the forthcoming opera, one where the Roman maiden Valeria described her lover in combat against the enemies of Rome. As Signor Sanzio had said, the opera was a slight thing, got up merely to please the popular taste of the day, and had no chance against criticism; but Irene put so much soul into her part, that its poverty and triviality disappeared; she created it, in fact; she was singing her own feelings; she too was Roman, and Nota was her hero!

'Ah! you sang very differently this morning,' said Signor Sanzio, shaking his head.

'I know ——. I could not feel it then. Is it not true that something can be made of *Valeria?*'

'True enough, it seems; but I am convinced that this operetta is a folly — *una pazzeria.* There is a strong party for Madame St. Simon, and she will move heaven and earth to make us fail; her engagement is just out, she is going to Naples, and she will wind up comfortably by spiting you. Besides, I know this will be made a furious party matter; the *Oscurantisti* will raise a tumult as sure as I sing bass at our theatre. Parties are running so high just now, that a feather would cause a revolution.'

'Poor music!' said Vincenzo.

'Ay, poor music! she gets into very indifferent society sometimes; one can't keep her in the hands of Santa Cecilia and the angels. It is a trade after all; we cater for the public, and we must please the popular taste, though your sister won't allow it.'

'Even Madame Marriotti says something of the same kind at times,' said Vincenzo; 'but I believe she looks forward to Irene's going to regions where music is better understood.'

Irene smiled and shook her head; her hopes centred in Rome.

'Vienna, or London for instance,' continued Signor Sanzio. 'It would be just as well to go away for a while; you would come back with fresh *prestige*, and we should have felt the want of you. At present there is a faction for Madame St. Simon, and that implies one against you; you have more enemies than friends in the

company, for all the bad ones are against you, and only the good for you, including myself!'

'You have indeed been an excellent friend, Signor Sanzio,' said Vincenzo; 'Irene would not now stand as she does quite free from all the *tracasseries* of the theatre, but for you.'

'Pooh — pooh, I only gave her the benefit of a little of my five-and-thirty years' experience of the stage; she would have fought her way well enough, even if I had not been there.'

'But you often held out a hand to me, when others stood by, waiting to see me fall,' said Irene.

'The only danger for you was, that you were too inexperienced to know evil when you saw it; that wisdom is soon acquired. I knew it would be war to the death from Madame St. Simon from the night that you made so much of that trifling part of *Elvira*, that you quite threw her into the background. She had broken in the poor Bresca so completely, that the girl never dreamed of doing anything but second her, and doubtless it was very unpleasant to find that a new rival had sprung up — such a very intractable one too!'

'I suspect, signor, you have no great love for Madame St. Simon,' said Vincenzo.

'Signor Mori, if you could conceive what that woman has made me suffer! I could forgive her airs and caprices and jealousies — all that is allowable to her as *prima donna*, and as woman; but, when I hear her falsifying a great composer's work to show off her voice, I feel capable of any excesses! Now, the very reason why from the first I had great hopes of your sister was, that she never tried to propitiate the Saint Simon, and never made a point at the expense of truth; when a part was simple, she let it remain so; she follows what the composer indicates; whereas the habits of most singers are such, that Rossini was obliged to write all his ornaments; but sometimes the composer indicates nothing, as in this *Caio*, and she makes far too much of *Valeria*, and that is wrong, for the audience will believe the music worth something.'

'If ever I am *prima donna assoluta*,' began Irene.

'That is to say, if you are here next season, when we are delivered from the Saint Simon ——'

'I should try very hard to make the chorus a little less like mop-sticks. They ought all to feel that they are priestesses of the temple, though of a lower grade, and the scenery might surely be less bad, and our wardrobe more classical.'

'In vain — quite in vain, signorina. First of all, the style of *accessory* you are imagining would cost more, chorus and scenery. You can't make a bramble-bush into an orange-tree by money, but you must pay if you want oranges instead of blackberries. A better style of singer would want higher pay. Then secondly, what do the Romans care for good acting or scenery in the opera? They say we want singing, not acting; they are content with a voice *molto agile*, with plenty of *fioratura* in it; that alone has made Madame St. Simon popular — she has not, and never had a spark of genius.'

'Surely it is our business to improve the public taste, Signor Sanzio, not to take advantage of its low tone.'

'Dreams, dreams, signorina; you must go to England. There the opera is for the rich, here it is for the people. If you can inspire us all with your own ideas, *manco male*, but — !'

'It is of no use arguing with you, signor! You spoke of Catarina Bresca just now — why has she not been at rehearsal lately?'

'Ill, I believe. She has been dismissed for non-attendance. I have not heard of her since the night she failed.'

'Poor Catarina!' said Irene, 'the public little think how cruel they are. That night when she was hissed, I saw her just before the call-boy summoned us; she was leaning against the wall choking with tears; I tried to learn what was the matter, but she only repulsed me, and then came, "*Signori e signore, si va cominciar*," and I could not wait. I have never seen her since.'

'Ah, poor thing, it has been clear this long while her voice was going.'

'What do you suppose will become of her?'

He shrugged his shoulders. 'What does become of such as she when they cease to charm the public? I should suppose she had not a farthing in the world. It is no joke to depend on one's voice for a subsistence; a cold, an illness — 'tis gone! I shall never forget the look of terror and anguish with which poor Viola

once said to me, "I am losing my voice!" and I could not deny it. Ah, *poveretta*, she died in a garret; she, the queen of cantatrices! She and all the rest of us live like grasshoppers — we chirp all the summer, and perish in the winter!'

Vincenzo looked fondly at Irene, and thought with gratitude that she was not entirely dependent on her voice for a subsistence. She looked sad, and said, 'I should like to know something about Catarina; where does she live?'

Signor Sanzio gave the address, but added, 'You have done wisely to keep aloof from her, poor thing, so far — for what are you seeking after her now? You know she and others have done many an ill turn to "Sant' Irene!" Do you know, Signor Mori, that a certain set have bestowed that name on your sister? They declare she lives like an anchorite, and that if she were not a heretic the Pope ought to canonize her?'

Irene blushed, as much past annoyance was thus recalled to her mind. 'Did I ever seem to care for their folly, signor?'

'Yes, my signorina, for any one who saw how your lip would curve, and how loftily you carried that graceful head, would have seen that in your heart you did care, and little marvel; but you are no doubt too proud to bear malice.'

'I hope so,' said Irene, laughingly. 'A theatrical life ought to harden one against little vexations, or it would be intolerable.'

'If ever you feel cast down and discouraged, as I saw you when you left the theatre to-day, remember this, signorina,' said the old man, suddenly changing his bantering, satirical tone for one full of feeling: 'you have not lived in vain; you have done honor to our profession; you have raised its character, young as you are. You have proved that a cantatrice may be admired and successful, and yet bear as fair a name as any nun in a cloister. Only keep on as you have begun; I cannot say more than that!'

'Thanks, Signor Sanzio,' said Vincenzo, much gratified, and Irene's eyes were glistening with tears that prevented her from replying. Temptations, harass, trials, all seemed nothing at that moment, when her heart thrilled with the consciousness that what Signor Sanzio said was but the truth.

'There, I hear another visitor coming; I shall go,' said he,

rising; but Vincenzo stopped him with, 'No, pray stay; it is Nota.'

'Signor Nota? Ah; I generally do have the pleasure of meeting him here,' said Signor Sanzio, with a smiling, penetrating look at Irene, whose engagement to Leone was generally surmised, though not formally acknowledged. 'Well, signor, have you headed any more deputations to his Holiness lately?'

'No,' said Leone, who looked somewhat harassed. 'We have too much of such demonstrations. Talk hinders work. Irene, I have been finding out all I can of Nettuno for Mrs. Dalzell; I don't believe it is a place for you to make your *villeggiatura* in.'

'What! Nettuno!' said Signor Sanzio, 'near the old Porto d'Ansio? A mere village; the sea has eaten away the rocks, till it washes under a thin shell of ground; village, and fortress, and all will be swallowed some day. You are not going there?'

'We heard it was a pretty place, with sea and oak woods.'

'Sea, yes. Forest three miles off, unless you count brushwood. A wretched place; the one good thing about it is the costume.'

'I have seen it in Carnival,' said Vincenzo; 'the girls wear green ribbons in their hair, the wives red, and the widows violet; but I can't help thinking Nettuno used to have a Greek costume — why did they leave it off?'

'I can't say — ask the poet.'

'The tradition says, that they once wore a kirtle of scarlet, reaching the knee,' said Leone, 'till the plague swept off half the population; and after this sign that Heaven was displeased at their scandalous dress, they changed it. So you don't recommend Nettuno, Signor Sanzio?'

'No, indeed, it would be *villeggiatura* with a vengeance. "*In ogni paese é buona stanza dove si leve il sole*," as they say in my own Florence; but it is a *stanza* I should hire by the day, rather than the week; and it would be dear at a paul. Well, what news do you bring of public affairs, Signor Nota? I see you have the *Patria* there; the *Alba* has gone mad, I verily believe; I wish Government would prohibit it.'

'Oh, you are an *Oscurantisto!*' said Irene, playfully; 'that is why you are against the *Caio*.'

'Only too old to roll along with the times, signorina. I shall go to Naples, where they are going backwards, instead of forwards. Some day we shall hear of a new kind of Vesuvius there. Oh, what asses, what asses our rulers are here and there, and what days you young rebels will see yet! Ah, you don't believe me! Addio, then, addio; remember what I say about *Valeria*, signorina!'

Seizing his purple umbrella, Signor Sanzio departed, keeping on the shady side of every street with his canopy over his head, and murmuring something to himself which might have been satire, or might have been song; the odd smile upon his face seemed to hint it was the former.

When he was gone Irene taxed Leone with looking weary, and asked if it was the fault of his work in the *Dateria*, or the newspaper which he now edited, or what?

'This is a splendid article in reply to that atrocious paper in the *Alba*,' said Vincenzo, taking up Leone's newspaper. 'I knew immediately that you had written it.'

'It has gone some way towards shaking my influence, Vincenzo. I find that a man who wishes to be popular must lead the cry of the day; once try to hold the people in, and you grow unpopular. We had a stormy meeting again last night; a speech of Clementi's set everybody by the ears; then two or three more spoke, urging violent measures and a Republic. I got up and talked for nearly an hour, and I believe had made some impression; but that ass of a Lelio Olivetti had found his way in, and must needs try his hand at a speech — made a furious, blundering, double-distilled *Papista* one, and there was an uproar as if all the lunatics from Santo Spirito were let loose among us! There will be an outbreak soon, unless some outlet be found for the spirit of the people. If they could only enlist, and march against the Austrians! I got a hearing again, and suggested a volunteer corps, and the idea took; but I don't know whether we shall be allowed to carry it out.'

'It will come to that some day,' said Vincenzo, and Irene's soft, dark eyes rested anxiously on Leone, who, however, dropped the subject with 'And how do you suppose the police have been employed this morning? In sweeping up little red

caps of liberty with which unknown hands had strewed the whole Corso!'

Irene laughed, and Vincenzo asked, 'Was Ravelli at the meeting last night?'

'Oh, to be sure — the most outrageous there!'

Leone could not help joining in the laugh, and no one thought it necessary to express their entire conviction who was the author of the practical joke that had so much scandalized the authorities.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lungi dal proprio ramo,
Povera foglia frale,
Dove vai tu? Dal faggio
La dov' io nacqui mi divise il vento,
Vo pellegrina, e tutto l'altro ignoro.
LEOPARDI.

ATTENDED by her maid, Irene went to seek for Catarina Bresca, whom hitherto she had only seen with disdain and aversion, as one of those who brought discredit on her profession. Catarina took secondary parts, and had a telling voice, and the beauty of youth and loveliness when Irene first saw her; but voice and beauty had been fast vanishing of late. The girl was grieving about something, or overworked, or — in short, no one knew or cared what; she had been dismissed from the *corps dramatique*, and was already nearly forgotten.

Irene reached the house whither she had been directed by Signor Sanzio, and leaving her maid below to wait for her, ran up the dark, creaking staircase, and knocked at a door, which opening gave to view a dirty, untidy room, apparently serving for a whole family to live in both by day and night. Two men were busy cutting cameos by the window; a group of noisy children sat on the floor playing at *Lupo*, and half-a-dozen pigeons walked familiarly about. Irene could hardly make her inquiries heard, but at last was bidden to go up to another story. Here she found a woman spinning, who directed her to an opposite room. '*Passi!*' was returned to her knock, and she entered a small disorderly apartment, where a girl lay on a bed, wrapped in a shawl of gay colors and fine texture, which, though

now soiled and dirty, betrayed by its costliness that she had known riches as well as poverty. A ray of sunshine came in through the glowing window panes, and glittered on a half-made Swiss costume, the gaudy hues of which contrasted strangely with the squalid look of everything else. Catarina raised herself up with difficulty, to see who had come in, and a deeper flush came on her thin, hectic cheeks.

'What! Sant' Irene!' she exclaimed, 'Sant' Irene here! *Here!* She who would not have touched me with the hem of her gown!' A fit of hard and painful coughing stopped her, and shivering she drew her shawl closer round her.

'I thought you must be ill, Catarina; I have not seen you at rehearsal all the week,' said Irene, taking the girl's fevered hand in her own cool fresh one. Catarina snatched it away.

'Say it out; you have not seen me since the night I was hissed! Ah, the stony hearts! I had not tasted food that day — I was ready to faint; and I had to go on the stage and be hissed for singing false. You may know yet what it is to have to act when your heart is breaking! Oh no, not you; you have rich friends, you can afford to despise such as I am.'

'Catarina, I have known what it is to be starving.'

'You?'

'Yes, I and my brother; but a kind friend saved us. Will you not let me help you, as she helped me? Indeed, I want to be friends with you, Catarina.'

'What did you come here for?' asked Catarina, scrutinizing her face.

'Only to see if I could do anything for you.'

'You would not have spoken to me a week ago.'

Irene was silent, and the girl broke out passionately, 'Oh, you who hold yourselves so high above us poor wretches, what do you know of our temptations, you who are kept like relics in a shrine, and have kind friends and a home! I might have been a saint if I had had a home like yours. I was born in a back street in Naples, and I don't know who my father was; and if people wished to twit me, they cast my mother's name in my teeth! No one about us knew bad from good; we were not ashamed, for we did not know what to be ashamed of; we be-

lieved the whole world was like ourselves. I sang at the *cafés*, and Giordani took me as his pupil on speculation; and then I was at the theatres there, and next I came here, and you know the rest. I may as well die now, for I've nothing to live by but my voice, and that's gone — I've no more than — a jay,' she concluded with a bitter laugh, as she uttered that word, the most contemptuous, when applied to a woman, in the Italian language.

'I must have often seemed very cruel,' said Irene, remorsefully, as she recalled how she had always shrunk from the unhappy girl.

'It was no wonder,' said Catarina, too feeble to sustain her vehement tone, and touched by the compassion of Irene's tearful eyes. 'You had a right to despise me, I suppose — all the world would do the same, and those who led me to this would be the first to do so. I have not a creature in the world that cares for me. I have been a leaf blown about in the wind all my life, and the sooner it withers the better. If you were ill, you would have a dozen friends round you. They say you are half Neapolitan, is that true?'

'My mother came from Sora.'

'Do you remember her?' asked the girl, studying her face with strange, sad curiosity.

'Oh yes, I often see her in my dreams.'

'Ah! you are not ashamed to name her?' said Catarina, a tear stealing down her hot cheek. 'You are happy! No one can taunt you with her name. I always gave money as long as I had any to buy masses for my mother's soul. I had some one to love me while she lived; and when people taunt me about her, I give them as good as they bring, for I loved her dearly. No one else ever cared whether I lived or died, or I might have been different from what I am.'

'Are you really alone here all day?'

'Yes. The neighbors don't like to come much, because they say consumption is contagious. I may not have got it — no doctor has said so;' Catarina interrupted herself quickly — 'They are a set of cowards. There, now I suppose you will not venture here again — I don't know why I suppose you would. You had better not.'

Some lingering dislike of Irene, desire to retain this her only visitor, and something of generous fear that she might be injured by her visits to a consumptive girl, mingled in this speech. Irene assured her she had no fear, and reflected what she could do for her.

'Tell me what you want most, Catarina?'

'Everything! I have nothing even to drink. I woke last night dying of thirst, and could not reach a drop of water. I coughed till morning, and at last the woman in the room opposite heard me and came in.'

'Would she fetch you what you want?'

'Yes, I dare say she would. Oh, I have so longed for an orange! These last three nights, I have dreamed of the orange trees at Sorrento, and when I wake and find myself in the dark in this hole, I would throw myself out of the window, only I dare not — death is so terrible. I could have been so happy, if life had been a little less cruel; after all, death can hardly be worse. I am sure I did not ask for much!'

Irene leant over her and kissed her, full of compassion. Catarina looked up astonished.

'No one has ever kissed me so kindly since my mother died!' said she; 'if all heretics be like you, there can be no room for Catholics in Paradise. But I shall never get there — our old priest said so long ago.'

'Dear Catarina,' said Irene, 'I have read the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it tells how many people came to Him to be cured of sickness, and blindness, and deafness, but only one is mentioned as having come to Him for nothing but to ask forgiveness for her sins, and that was a woman. She had led so bad a life, that all the city knew of it, and scorned her; and yet, when she came to Him, in the midst of a great feast, He did not send her away.'

'Go on; did the Holy Virgin pray for her?'

'No, she does not seem to have been there. This poor woman came through the crowd, and stood weeping by Him, without even a word; yet He said that, whatever the world thought of her, He forgave her, because she loved Him much.'

'Are you sure it is true? is it in our Bible?'

'Indeed it is; ask your priest, if you like, and don't forget it, Catarina!'

'Because she loved much! Then He loved her too, for He would not let her be so wretched as to love without any one loving her again. I should not mind dying, if it were not for purgatory. Oh, I once heard such a sermon on purgatory — it drives me mad to think of it — and it must come!' said the girl, shrinking down and covering her face. Irene knew that she must not combat her persuasion; it would have been useless.

'But if Christ said to you that your sins were forgiven, He could not intend you to suffer more,' she said. 'Ask Him, Catarina.'

'I will. I can do that! Are you going? Shall you come back?'

'Yes, to-morrow. I must go, I have to study my part for next week.'

'You are going to take *Valeria?* Oh, Irene, I know Madame St. Simon has been plotting against you, and her great protector Cortona will do anything she wishes! If they should get up a party and hiss you — you don't know what it is to be hissed! I wished once that you should know, and now I wonder why! No one remembered me but you.'

'Thank you for letting me help you, Catarina. Make that woman you spoke of get whatever you want; I am answerable for it. And should you dislike to see Signora Olivetti? She has the care of the sick in this parish.'

Catarina had not been so brought up as to shrink from obligation to strangers. The offer was gladly accepted, and Irene departed with a promise of seeing Signora Olivetti, then stepping across into the room of the spinner, she directed her to fetch whatever her neighbor needed. The woman seemed kindly disposed towards the poor invalid, and drew a sad picture of her wants and loneliness. 'A fortnight ago, signora, she heard the family who live below me bewailing themselves because some one had robbed them, and stolen away the eldest girl's dowry, so that her marriage could not take place. When the signorina heard that, down she came with five or six *scudi* in her hand, and gave them to the girl — who is now married; and, when I asked Signorina Bresca what she herself was to do — for you see I knew she was poor herself — "Eh!" said she, "Madonna

Santa Cecilia will provide for me!" Poor thing, she had not a single paul left and has earned next to nothing since!'

Irene smiled and sighed as she recognised the generous improvident artist-spirit. As she returned into the street, the tray of a vendor of oranges and lemons caught her eye, full of freshly plucked fruit; Catarina's desire for an orange recurred to her, and she could not help buying as many as her hands would hold for her. She ran up-stairs again with them, and poured out the fragrant golden treasures on the bed.

'Oh, *Santa Vergine!* it is what I was thinking of! May she reward you, dear Irene!' said Catarina, overjoyed, and Irene once more rejoined her staid duenna below stairs, and went, escorted by her, to Casa Olivetti, where she reported Catarina's case to the signora, who was one of the ladies appointed by authority to look after the sick and needy in that parish. There was no fear now that Catarina would not be well cared for, and with a lighter heart Irene returned home to study *Valeria.*

Her pulses beat a little faster than usual — with defiance however, not with fear, when she thought of the *Caio.* She knew that Signor Mattei had been strongly urged to withdraw it, and the excitement and whispering at rehearsal betrayed that plots and cabals were clustering thickly round the new opera, which in fact had become doubly a party matter; the liberals taking it as a compliment, and the anti-liberals regarding it as an insult. Madame St. Simon, enraged at being set aside by the manager, was bent on humiliating her young rival, and all who favored her or had a spite against Irene, ranged themselves in opposition to the *Caio.* The manager would have withdrawn it at last, when he found what a violent party matter it had become, had he not known that this would afford an unbounded triumph to a certain theatre which had been making head against him, and would moreover enrage the liberal party. He did all that could be done to insure success; unusual pains were taken in the getting up, and repeated rehearsals drilled all the performers thoroughly into their parts. All knew that the dangerous moment would be Irene's solo with its ardent apostrophe to Liberty. The chances, however, were strong, that her exquisite voice and finished acting would carry it safely through; and in

other scenes Sanzio seconded her so well in the rehearsals, that Signor Mattei's courage rose high.

Great was the excitement and trepidation visible among the *corps dramatique* on the night when the *Caio* was to be brought out, and seldom had so overflowing an audience appeared in the theatre. Every box was more than full, and there was barely standing-room in the pit, and heated and crushed spectators exclaimed that it was bad as St. Andrea when Padre Rinaldi preached! The curtain drew up amid breathless expectation; the first scene was a chorus, and Irene did not appear in it; the next was a duet between her and Sanzio, and the applause as she entered was vehement, but partial. If she had only thought of herself, it would have been very formidable to encounter the myriads of curious eyes that scrutinized her from boxes and pit; but there was no shrinking or tremor in Irene; never had she looked so inspired nor so lofty as when she stood, braced up by a knowledge of coming peril; and the two next scenes ended amid rapturous and increasing plaudits, which turned Madame St. Simon, concealed in her box, yellow with jealousy and malice. But the trial point came later, with the solo, which had universally been fixed on as the battle ground. The address to Liberty alluded so plainly to the events of the day, that at almost the first lines, a mingled thrill of applause and discontent ran through the house. A version had been prepared, greatly modified from the ultra expressions of the first draught; and this Irene had at first intended to have given, but that show of discontent roused her high spirit; she accepted the challenge, rashly — perhaps unjustifiably — and burst forth with all the power of her rich voice into an apostrophe to Freedom. The denunciation of tyrants electrified the audience for a moment. The next, her notes were almost drowned in an uproar which shook the whole theatre. Hisses, outcries, stamping, stifled the applause, which was still loudly raised by all the liberals present; the orchestra was totally inaudible; every time the noise was lulled, it rose again wilder than before; the pit was a scene of confusion indescribable, voices and gestures let loose — a mimic war. Signor Mattei appeared, and sought in vain with imploring gestures to make himself heard; the chorus shrank terrified out of sight; the con-

tralto, Emilia Orioli, was sobbing from actual alarm; Signor Sanzio stood composedly surveying the tumult, and Irene, with eyes flashing light on those who had insulted her, remained in the full front of the stage, disdaining to retreat, and apparently looking as indifferently on the outrageous audience as the moon on all the dogs that bay at her. Suddenly, above all the uproar, a voice like a trumpet called 'Shame!' and then her eyes filled with tears, something seemed to choke her, she knew that Leone had seen her insulted, and the cause of liberty insulted in her.

So entirely hopeless was it to quell the riot, that Signor Mattei ordered the curtain to fall, and the company gathered behind it in the utmost consternation, every one except Irene open-mouthed with assertions, declarations, and reproaches. She stood silent, her features full of scorn, making no reply to the blame heaped unsparingly upon her, only when Signor Sanzio said apart to her, 'I told you how it would be,' she answered, 'If I had stayed there all night, they should have heard me at last. Signor Mattei has given them a triumph.'

Signor Mattei had just settled that the curtain should rise again and the prose piece begin, as if the opera had been performed and ended as usual. The uproar had now died out; and, as though to mark the motive of the tumult, the play was received well, and the nerves of the actors experienced no further shocks. Irene had no more to do; and left the theatre with her maid, who was waiting for her. She had not gone three steps when Leone was by her side. 'My darling! that they should have dared to insult you! They shall have reason to repent this night! Let me look at you, Irene.'

She turned her face to him, now pale and tearful. 'All say it was my own fault, Leone; but I did not feel as if they were insulting me, but our cause.'

'It was the betrothed of Leone Nota! Oh, they meant to hit more than you, and I had to look on while you stood there, my own Irene! braver than all the cowards who hissed a woman for praising liberty!'

'I did not care, Leone; I was only contemptuous till I heard your voice. I could not be afraid of a miserable mob like that.'

'This threatens for the future; perhaps, Ravelli is right, and

we shall do nothing with these *Papiste* till we fight them, and show which is the strongest. The cowardly crew!'

'I heard Ravelli's voice and Clementi's, I think. My farewell to this season!'

'Your farewell to the Roman stage, Irene; you shall never appear there again.'

'Don't talk of it to-night, dear Leone — I can't think; I can't judge to-night. That sea of madmen is always before my eyes. Ah, I feel now, that a woman cannot step out of private life without suffering for it. This will grieve Vincenzo.'

It was Irene's first experience of the fickleness of popular favor; she was deeply wounded, and felt keenly how bitterly Leone suffered with her. It was well that the season soon ended, and a change of scene gave her overwrought mind time to recover its natural healthy tone. The unhappy operetta was withdrawn, and for the remainder of the season Madame St. Simon had it all her own way.

In the mean time, Irene's leisure was divided between Madame Marriotti, whose vexation at the result of the *Caio* had brought on an attack of illness, and Catarina, who, the day after the failure, sent to entreat Mademoiselle Mori to visit her. Dispirited and worn out as Irene felt, she obeyed the summons and was cheered by the effort. Catarina's vehement sympathy did her good, and she employed herself in making arrangements for the invalid's benefit during her absence. The parting was sad, for she felt that she should never see the dying girl again; no kindness nor care could save her, but at least her deathbed would not be desolate. Catarina's last words to her were, 'But for you, I should have died in the street. I should have been less bad, if we had met sooner. Speak kindly sometimes to Clarice Monti, and tell her about me; I think you might save her, if you would.'

Irene never saw her again; she died a few days later, murmuring, in her own Neapolitan, some song that she had heard as a child sung by the fishermen on the blue waters that kiss the sunny shores of Naples.

The idea of going to Nettuno was given up; Madame Marriotti invited Mrs. Dalzell, Irene, and Vincenzo to spend the hot

months with her near Florence; and thought herself very fortunate in securing them, for in many things the old lady still resembled a child, she had a child's love of being taken care of and consoled in any small trouble; a solitary journey, or any unusual effort, alarmed her as if she had never faced public life. She had learned to rely completely on Irene, whom she expected, as a matter of course, to smooth everything for her, and fully intended to accompany her in another year to Germany. Irene quietly said that she must have time to consider this plan; she did not think it feasible, and then let the matter drop.

Madame Marriotti's villa at Florence received Mrs. Dalzell, Vincenzo, and Irene, and there Irene turned her mind from theatrical affairs, and rested her faculties till the recommencement of the theatrical season, against which she received an offer of an engagement from the Teatro Regio. It was too good to be refused; Madame Marriotti, therefore, reserved her Vienna scheme until the next season, and Leone reluctantly consented to Irene's reappearance at a Roman theatre.

CHAPTER XVIII.

E non so, e non so,
Se marito prenderò.
Canto Popolare.

Gemma had not calculated the consequences of making herself so agreeable to Lelio Olivetti. She instantly felt that she had fallen into a snare, when Signora Olivetti came to propose him as a *parti;* and, as soon as she was again alone with her mother, she declared, with passion, that nothing should induce her to marry him; she would kill herself if it were so much as named to her uncle. The poor contessa attempted no reply, but speedily and secretly informed Monsignore Clementi how matters stood, and he appeared in awful majesty in her drawing-room, to subdue the contumacious Gemma, whose conduct in refusing a match so good, that (as her aunt and mother both agreed) only her patron saint could have sent it, was absolutely sinful in the eyes of her whole family. Her redoubtable uncle did not waste many words upon the sullen, anger-flushed girl who stood immovable before him, not even seeming to hear that he addressed her, as he gave her the choice of marriage or a convent. This last alternative would have divided her too hopelessly from Ravelli, and at last she spoke, to declare that, if he attempted to send her to a convent, she would resist till every one in the palace came to see what was the cause of the uproar. There could be no doubt she would keep her word, and Monsignore Clementi actually changed color at the idea of such a scandal; but he only appointed a certain time in which she was to make up her mind; and then withdrew, leaving her under the ban of his displeasure.

Thenceforward began the combat between Gemma and her

family, who all carefully followed out a course of conduct prescribed by Monsignore Clementi. There was neither remonstrance nor reproach, but she was treated as a disgrace to her house, and unworthy of notice. If she spoke, she got no answer; no one ever addressed her; if a visitor entered, she was dismissed; she found exactly the same manner observed to her by her aunt and uncle, as by her mother; and visits to, and with, this aunt had in former days been Gemma's one variety and relief. The man-servant was changed; perhaps Clementi had divined that he was a go-between of Gemma and Ravelli; she saw no one but her relatives. A better plan for exasperating a violent temper could hardly have been devised. She burst into wild passions, implored, threatened, and met only silence and passive indifference. Her mother, indeed, would tremble and grow pale, but she obeyed her formidable brother-in-law's instructions to the letter, and took no notice of Gemma's outbreaks. Then Gemma threatened to starve herself, and did not eat for a day and a half — no one seemed to perceive it. She besought her aunt to have pity on her, and was answered by reproachful shakes of the head. She spent whole days in her room, but no one called her from morning to night. Her condition was becoming intolerable; she felt that there was only one way of ending it, and of seeing Ravelli once more, since she was never allowed to leave her apartments, and in the absence of her brother and of the Mori, Luigi had no excuse for frequenting the palace.

The count was at Ravenna. He had studiously held aloof from the whole affair; since it would have been inconsistent with his profession of ultra-liberal politics to promote his sister's marriage with a vehement *Papista;* nor could even such important family matters bring his uncle and himself together, so wide was the apparent rupture between them. He thought all communication cut off between Gemma and him whom she preferred, since Irene was at Florence, and Ravelli was fully occupied in surveying for a proposed railroad from Cività Vecchia.

The Olivetti family had gone for a short time into the country; but monsignore had pledged himself to give a speedy and decisive answer to Lelio. When next he summoned Gemma before him, she consented to the marriage.

It was nothing but a glimpse of Luigi Ravelli that had brought her to this.

One evening, as she leant wearily at her window, high above the street, she had seen him pass, and had been seized with such a longing to hear his voice, to meet him again, that she thought only how to purchase a moment of his presence. She knew that he and his family would be invited to assist at the *Capitoli*, as the legal ceremony is called, — a part of a marriage distinct from the religious ceremony, and performed at the bride's own house. And thus she gave her word.

Monsignore Clementi gave her his benediction and dismissed her, while he announced her consent to the rest of the family. Gemma flew back to her room, pursued by a little greyhound, a gift nominally to the countess from Ravelli. She bolted her door, wrote a few lines on a sheet of paper, and waited at her window. A new idea struck her all at once; she fastened the note to the collar of the little dog, opened her window, and waited again. It was a perilous height above the street. So much the worse for the greyhound; for as a figure passed in the dusk which she recognised as that of Ravelli, she slid the slender little creature through the bars and dropped it without a moment's hesitation. It fell like a feather, and the eager eyes above saw it spring up, shake itself, and run after its old master, who feeling two little paws strike his knee, looked down and saw his former pet. He was delighted at having a good reason for calling in Palazzo Clementi, stooped down to stroke the little creature, and perceived the note. A presentiment of evil struck him; he opened it beneath a lamp which burnt before a picture of the Virgin — read — and dashed towards Palazzo Clementi. He was half way up the stairs before he recollected that Count Clementi was at Ravenna. He could only ring and restore the greyhound, and was told that the countess saw no one that evening. There was nothing to be done, but wait, like Gemma, for that last interview.

When relations have consented, marriage comes quickly on betrothal in Rome. Almost before Gemma had realized that consent had been wrung from her the contract was prepared, and Signor Lelio acknowledged as her husband elect. He came

immediately to Rome, whither the Olivetti family had now returned, and appeared almost every evening in Palazzo Clementi, where he assuredly did not find Gemma as agreeable as at their first meeting; but he was blind and deaf to her slights and rebuffs; her uncle had promised her to him, and he never thought of asking what her own sentiments might be. Count Clementi took good care that, in the midst of the family favor which now shone upon Gemma, she should be as closely watched as before, and entirely rejected the offer of Lelio to live in Rome, should his future wife desire it. There were few things that he wished more than to see her safely married and gone. So closely was she watched that she could never slip a note into the trunk of the old orange tree, and she only went out with her mother to invite the guests for the evening of the *Capitoli*.

Signor Lelio was in a state of felicity indescribable, when he thought of the aristocratic alliance he was about to make; he spent fabulous sums on presents for his bride, and did not fail to tell every one how much they cost. He appeared first at one *circolo* and then another, making speeches which excited mingled laughter and wrath; he was always seizing on some reluctant acquaintance to pour out his tale of bliss to him. Signora Olivetti knew beforehand that she must listen to him for an hour at least whenever he could find her; and in short, he strutted about so glorious and so elated that he furnished amusement in half the *salons* of Rome. And all the time he was dogged by a black shadow of vengeance which had long sought after him, and had tracked him at last, but hitherto never alone. Some idea that he was watched by an enemy crossed his mind, and he suggested it to his cousin, Signor Olivetti, who took it as a further proof of Lelio's self-importance, and laughed at him, with the assurance that his life mattered to nobody but himself; but Lelio felt himself a person of importance; he puffed with injured dignity, and turned with his suspicions to the signora, who thought of Ravelli, then was angry with herself, but bade Lelio never go about alone, especially at night — advice which he was delighted to take, and his fears of assassination added a fresh jest to the many already circulating concerning him; though murders were not uncommon, and the laughter at Lelio's alarms was apt to die

away into stories of stabbing, of murdered men found lying at their own doors staining the steps with their heart's blood, of priests poniarded for having refused absolution; but these were mostly rumors from the provinces, though such things did happen in Rome itself.

The evening of the *Capitoli* came, and there was a reception in the contessa's apartment; the customary *rinfresco*, or banquet, was offered; for the family had made a great effort to keep up appearances on this occasion; the wedding gifts were arranged conspicuously, and friends and relations began to pour in. Among them were all the Ravelli family; Gemma never looked towards Luigi as he entered, but she saw, nevertheless, that his eyes were upon her, and read wonder, reproach, and misery in his glance. Dressed in white, with a white rose fastened on her boddice, she stood near the future husband, accepting the congratulations offered to her; Clementi was near, her uncle close by; she was environed; she felt that one of the passionate scenes she had lately wasted on them would be worse than useless now, and seemed so self-possessed and calm that they breathed more freely; for Monsignore Clementi himself felt a little afraid of his niece's temper, and as for the contessa — she had suffered a martyrdom during the visits she had been obliged to make with Gemma to invite the guests, expecting every moment an outbreak. But then, as now, the girl only maintained her lowering look, without any manifestation of resistance, and she allowed Lelio to talk to her incessantly, as custom permitted him on this evening; yet her eye glanced on him sometimes as if she could have struck the exultant coxcomb who paraded his rights so ostentatiously; and called every one's attention so anxiously to the wedding presents, amongst which were conspicuous the diamonds presented by himself, — necklace, ring, and ear-rings complete. Once or twice she looked from him to Ravelli, as if comparing them, but he made no attempt to approach her. The notary and his clerk arrived, and there was an instantaneous hush as the assembly gathered together to hear the contract read aloud, with its stipulations concerning residence, *villeggiatura*, and twenty *scudi* a month, *per le spille*, otherwise pin-money. The bride's dowry, a very small one, was handed over in gold in a white

pocket-handkerchief to the bridegroom, who affixed his name to the contract; the bride also signed, as did her mother. The religious ceremony was not to take place till a week later. This important matter being accomplished, there was a general move, a tendency to collect round the ices, creams, and *liqueurs;* Ravelli found an opportunity of standing beside Gemma, who was comparatively unwatched, and whispered a few impetuous words in her ear.

'I was driven to it, but I shall never see the inside of a church with him; if you cannot make some plan before this day week, I will escape without you.'

Their eyes met; he saw she meant what she said.

'Well, there is only one way — let him look to it,' muttered Ravelli, and he drew back; but his eye turned on Olivetti with an expression that had something deadly in it. When the party broke up, Ravelli went out at the same moment with Olivetti; a moment before there had been some words exchanged between them, first courteous on the part of the latter, who, in the plenitude of his happiness, was inclined to patronize even Ravelli, but the next instant they became angry, defiant. It all passed in an instant, and no one observed it but Gemma. There was a general laughing offer among Lelio's acquaintances to wait and escort him, which he declined with great dignity, and departed to his apartment at no great distance from the palace.

Gemma's manner was so much less sullen than it had been for weeks, when she bade her family good night, that her uncle praised her, and said, turning to his nephew, as soon as she was gone, 'Take care, she has some plan brewing to-night.'

'There is no fear now,' said the count, 'but I shall watch her.'

'Never trust a woman, especially if she speaks you soft, my nephew; it is a still stream that ruins the bridges, and you know "women have seven spirits in their bodies." A happy night, my dear sister-in-law; nay, nay, nay' — withdrawing his hand as she stooped to kiss it — 'do not think of it! Adieu, nephew;' and he spoke with a cordiality which would rather have surprised the guests, had they still been present; for amongst the little bits of scandal which all had carried away with them, was the exceeding coldness evident between uncle and nephew, and much was whis-

pered concerning the young count's folly or patriotism, according to the politics of the speakers, in sacrificing his chances of fortune from his uncle.

Monsignore Clementi had over-shot the mark when he declared that his niece had a plan for this night, but he did not guess amiss in believing that there was something hidden under that controlled demeanor, which, like the turbid river, allowed nothing beneath to be seen. She leant her forehead against her window hour after hour, expecting nothing yet everything; her heart beat almost audibly in the silence; a little lamp burnt on the table, illuminating the crucifix and a picture of the Virgin on the wall. Above her pillow was a cup for holy water, and one of the blessed palms, brought a few Sundays before from St. Peter's; all in the chamber seemed pure and innocent, as if aught else would have been misplaced in such a sanctuary. But what were the thoughts that surged in Gemma's breast? Flight, disgrace, was before her, or escape by means which involved cowardly crime in the one whom she loved! She only waited to choose between them. If seven spirits really haunted her, they must have been very evil ones; a good angel must have turned aside, and hidden his face from the look on hers, as she watched the clouds fly over the moon before the *sirocco* that swept through the streets and shook every door and shutter in the old palace that night. Perhaps a consciousness of evil visited her mind; for, starting suddenly up, she flung her handkerchief over the picture of the *Madonna*, and then went back to her excited yet purposeless watch.

Another kept ward for long hours; namely, Clementi, who, though he had the key of the outer-door in his own possession, trusted Gemma so little that he wished to be secure she did not leave her room that night. He had marked the whisper between her and Ravelli, but the look of Ravelli was not that of a man with a scheme promising success. Still, as he muttered to himself, while ensconced in an arm-chair, he listened warily, 'With each man be on your guard, but four times as much with a friend; as for Gemma, *La donna ne sa un punto più del diavolo.* There is but one woman in the world whom I could trust, and she is but half a Roman!' and once more he calculated his

chances of winning Irene's heart, and how soon he could dismiss Leone from the scene. He surveyed the tangled web of the present, and that still more tangled of the probable future, of which each new day revealed a portion, and thought long on the predictions of his sagacious and far-sighted uncle, one of the few priests who did not look with horror and dismay on the aspect of public affairs, and prophesied that all would turn out well for him and his colleagues. Count Clementi was, at heart, supremely indifferent as to which party might eventually succeed, except that he looked for some pecuniary advantage from his uncle's good fortune, and had felt as indignant as Monsignore Clementi himself, that all hopes of a cardinal's hat seemed dead with Gregorio XVI. The whole family had looked forward to debts being paid, and their fallen fortunes rising with this event, which, though extremely costly to the new dignitary at the time, is very lucrative in the end.

Convinced at last that Gemma was resigned to her destiny, he gave up his vigil and went to bed, whence he did not emerge till towards luncheon time next day. The contessa had been so wearied by the unusual excitement of the evening before, that she too was unusually late, and did not appear till her son and daughter were about to begin their simple meal, which to-day was augmented by fragments of the *rinfresco*. Contessa Clementi could speak of nothing but the contract and wedding presents, especially Signora Olivetti's — 'a shawl, which must have cost at least a hundred *scudi!*'

'I told you, Gemma, she would give you something handsome; and, really that emerald brooch that Signora Ravelli brought you, was magnificent; those people like to give something superb, to show off their wealth a little; they are all rich — it is only the real old noble families that condescend to be poor. The English, who are all merchants, are as rich as emperors. If we had been commoners, your brother would have made a fortune in some profession; but, as we were noble, I could not let him degrade himself; and he could not be an ecclesiastic, for he is the last of the Clementi, and Antonio has no children.'

'Oh, Count Arrigo has taken an *impiego*,' said Gemma, impatiently.

'Oh, Count Arrigo, they are mere *parvenus* compared to us; I have heard that there was one of our family in the time of some Roman Emperor — Julius Cæsar, I think it was — there is no family older than ours, Gemma. I wish Signor Lelio were noble; but then you had no dowry. In my time, however, girls of rank never married at all unless their parents met with a husband of equal rank for them; it would have been a disgrace. But all that seems changed now. I can't think what is to be the end of all these new ideas, and how, Pietrucchio, you can take them up is incomprehensible to me.'

'It is the only way left for me to make my fortune, *mamma mia*,' said Clementi, with the playful and caressing tone in which he usually addressed his mother, and she smiled and said, 'You are a good boy, Pietrucchio — where are you going now?'

'I was thinking of looking for Olivetti; a friend of mine proposed a boar-hunt for next week, and I dare say Lelio will join us, and be delighted to set us all to rights.'

'A boar-hunt? it is not the season.'

'There is more or less of it all the year round; I saw four boars with magnificent tusks in a shop near the Pantheon yesterday, and all the people were looking at them.'

'But if you go out I shall have nobody but Gemma. Signor Lelio might come here, I think; he might wait till after marriage to be so ungallant.'

'I will stay, mamma. Close that shutter, Gemma, the sun dazzles her.'

'You are always thoughtful, Pietrucchio *mio;* sons are more comfort than daughters. I wish you would marry some rich girl, and then we could all live together, and pay off our debts. It is a great thing to have Gemma provided for.'

'I wonder why daughters are born, since all that their parents wish is to get rid of them,' said Gemma, in a voice where acute pain and resentment were mingled together. 'You are happy now, mamma; it is the first time you ever were pleased where I was concerned.'

'Now, Gemma, that is one of your perverse fancies; pray, pray don't get into one of those dreadful tempers! I wish to see you well married of course, since you have no vocation for the

convent. Pietrucchio!' said the contessa, imploringly, as if bespeaking his protection from Gemma.

'You need not be afraid, mamma — you will not be burdened with me long, any way,' said Gemma, sitting down at some distance. The contessa looked so nervous and shaken that Clementi, who never interfered between her and Gemma, set himself to compose her, and introduced a subject that never failed to interest her — namely, the lottery. 'I had no time to tell you yesterday, dear mother, but imagine what a friend of mine has done. His sisters all dreamed of the same number. The eldest one night, the second on the next night, the third on the following one. Of course they felt it was an advertisement from Heaven; they told their brother, who has no faith in these things. He is a sad sceptic indeed, and laughed at them, but promised to take the number for them. Alas! he forgot entirely, and it has just been announced to be the winning number!'

'See that!' exclaimed the contessa; 'I call that a warning from Heaven to him!'

'What do you want, Filippo?' asked Gemma of the servant, who stood at the door making signs unperceived to the count. 'Come in.'

'What is it? Why does he not speak? Make him tell us, Pietrucchio — I must know —' said the contessa, greatly alarmed by this mysterious pantomime, and Clementi said sharply, 'Come in, and say whatever it is at once, stupid fellow.'

The man advanced with looks full of horror. 'He's dead, signor; they have murdered him!'

'Olivetti!' exclaimed Gemma.

'*Si, signorina, si;* he has been found with a knife in his heart — he is dead and cold!'

'*Asino!* hold your tongue, you will kill my mother!' cried Clementi, as the contessa gasped out some unintelligible words, and sank back insensible. 'She's dying — here, scents, water — Gemma, help her!'

Gemma was the only one who had not lost all self-possession. Her hand indeed trembled so that she could not open the scent-bottle, but she remembered where it was, and fetched water instantly, and her mother slowly revived, and looked vacantly round

as if trying to remember what had caused her swoon. Clementi leant over her, terrified out of his senses at the sudden attack. 'There, there, you are better now, darling mother; there's nothing wrong — speak to me — I am here. Pietrucchio is with you, *mamma mia!*'

'Why don't you give her air? Don't hang over her in that way,' said Gemma, in tones strangely harsh and forced, as she opened a window wide. 'Do stand back, Pietrucchio; she can't breathe. Mamma, you can go to your room now — let me help you.'

'Pietrucchio, Pietrucchio,' whispered the contessa, shrinking against him, while he held her hand and called her by every caressing name; 'are you there? what has happened? who did Filippo say was killed? Tell me.'

'It is some lie about a murder; one hears a dozen like tales every day — I don't believe a word of it, *mamma mia.*'

'Signor Conte, it is true,' cried Filippo. 'I saw the poor dear signor's valet only just now. The people speak of nothing else; the street was full all the morning of crowds come to see where he was found lying. He was stabbed in the Ripetta; I saw a crowd there when I was out just now going to the market; so I turned down to see, and a woman cried out that it was a friend of the Olivetti who had been murdered, and I went to the poor signor's lodgings and heard it was he from Enrico. Signor Olivetti has gone to Rocca di Passa, but they have sent to tell him. Some say it was for politics, and some that an old enemy had him murdered.'

During this speech the contessa gradually understood what had happened, and clasping her hands, exclaimed, 'Holy Virgin! who can have done this? Oh, Gemma, unhappy child! it is worse than the marchese.'

'You see it is dangerous to ask me in marriage, mamma,' replied Gemma; 'but there are the wedding presents to comfort you.'

'*Sangue della Madonna!*' ejaculated Filippo, staring at his young mistress; 'she will not break her heart for Signor Lelio, apparently!'

'Let me take you to your room, dearest mother; Filippo shall

tell my aunt — go and tell her, Filippo,' said Clementi, putting his arm round his mother, and almost carrying her away. Her feeble lamentations were soon lost in the distance; Gemma remained alone, with a strange look on her face — horror, revenge, triumph mixed together. Her hand closed as if on an imaginary dagger, the scene appeared passing before her; she did not flinch when Clementi returned and asked abruptly, 'How did you know who was murdered?'

'It was natural I should think immediately of Signor Lelio.'

'Are you a fool, to suppose that pretext will take me in?'

'Not at all, Pietrucchio; I did not say I *feared* it was he.'

'Gemma! you knew of this!'

'No, I did not,' she answered, without shrinking from the grasp in which he held her arm; 'No, I did not,' she repeated, and her eyes met his so steadily that his belief in her complicity was shaken, and he released her. She silently raised her sleeve, and showed her wrist bruised by his violence. He winced — no man would hurt a woman in cold blood, and she took the advantage he had given her. 'I know nothing about it, Pietrucchio, I tell you; I cannot be sorry, but I am not a murderess.'

'If you were, it would be little use to find it out now,' muttered Clementi; 'I believe devoutly that you are capable of it. Of course you won't say if you suspect any one?'

'Take care whom you suspect, Pietrucchio, if ever you mean to see Irene's face again.'

'Serpent that you are! and idiot that I was to let you worm yourself into my confidence,' said Clementi, through his set teeth; 'it will come to open war between us; but I must wait awhile I suppose.'

Frequent as assassinations had become under the late reigns, this murder in Rome itself, and of a man well connected, and inoffensive except from his absurd vanity, was so startling that there was a great sensation throughout the city, and unusual efforts were made to discover the criminal. The elder Olivetti offered large rewards; the police arrested several persons on suspicion; but after a tedious examination they were released, as nothing could be proved against them. The only thing that could serve as a clue was a Trasteverine knife, which was found

stained with blood near the corpse, and confirmed at once a suspicion that had speedily suggested itself to Clementi, who did not after the first moment believe Ravelli the author of the deed, though his suspicions were again strongly roused by Gemma's evident belief in Ravelli's guilt, and his own strange manner, so unlike his usual one that all remarked it. But if Lelio Olivetti had offended one of the unforgetting, unforgiving Trasteverini, his death was accounted for; and Clementi having made up his mind that one of the *basso ceto*, or populace, was the criminal, was satisfied, and let the matter drop without expressing his private opinion. It suited him well that the deed should be laid to the door of the liberal party, who were supposed to be offended by Lelio's obtrusive Austrian tendencies; and absurd as the rumor was, it floated far and wide, and gained credence in Roman society, always eager to seize on any gossip, whether it be how a priest sang mass well or ill, or that a man beat his wife in the Trastevere.

CHAPTER XIX.

Happy is he who loves companionship,
And lights on thee, Luigi;
Thy locks jet black, and clustering round a face
Open as day and full of manly daring;
Thou hadst a heart, a hand for all that came —
Mishap passed o'er thee as a summer cloud.

ROGERS.

IT could be no trifle that made Luigi Ravelli's gloom so lasting, and Count Clementi silently sought to discover the cause, and with this object allowed him several opportunities for conversation with Gemma, taking care to be within earshot. Nature had given him the acute eye and ear of a savage; he seemed to hear and see whatever he wished at any distance, but he listened in vain, and Ravelli seemed reluctant to meet Gemma. He could not, however, refuse an invitation one evening to return home from the Circolo with Clementi, and the old spell presently drew him, in spite of himself, to Gemma's side. Clementi was playing cards with his mother, who did not catch a sound from the other two; yet he heard Gemma speak as plainly as if he had been by her side. He threw new animation into his play, and said something which made the contessa laugh heartily; but his ear was intent on the whisper at the other end of the room, as Ravelli examined Gemma's work and stooped to pick up her fallen silk. 'Really, Luigi, no one has been so much afflicted by Olivetti's death as yourself! How long do you mean to wear mourning for him? You seem quite inconsolable. I think, if I can bear his loss you might! Now do tell me, did you know anything about it?'

She spoke very low, and glanced towards the card-table. 'Come, tell me, Luigi,' she persevered, reassured by the attention paid by the players to their game.

'What do you mean?' demanded Ravelli, as low, but so angrily, that a less audacious spirit than hers would have retracted in haste. Not so Gemma.

'Why! Do you mean that he disappeared, so very opportunely, by chance?'

'Do you mean that you take me for an assassin, Gemma?'

'I don't take you for anything shocking; I only want to know why you go about looking as doleful as a death's-head.'

'You hold life lightly,' said Ravelli, looking down on her almost with repugnance. 'You knew this man, you consented to marry him; he is murdered almost at your door, and you are less moved than if your canary-bird had died!'

'I hated that man,' she answered hastily, her face changing from its mocking smile into fierce earnestness. 'I would have thanked anybody who had poisoned him or me that night! You need not taunt me with having consented to marry him; it was only that I might see you again — you know I should have fled to the world's end before he called me his wife. I thought you took the only means left to deliver me from him.'

'You really believed that I murdered Lelio Olivetti?'

'I saw you exchange not very amicable words with him, and next morning he is found dead,' she answered, amazed at the manner in which he repelled her accusation. 'I was miserable enough, I am sure, for if any one else had noticed the quarrel, they must have suspected you — how could you be so rash, Luigi?'

He turned from her with a look, as if she, whom he had thought so fair, had turned into a serpent before his eyes. She saw, and rising, stepped before him. 'What do you mean? What have I said? Tell me what you are thinking of.'

'I think — why I think that I know you better than I did — and so — *addio*, contessina.'

'Are you mad? What is it, Luigi?'

He would not take the hand put out to stop him, but passed impetuously by, and the contessa, awakening to the fact that her daughter was almost *tête-à-tête* with a young man, called her to come nearer the light.

'What were you telling Gemma, signor?'

'I was saying adieu, Signora Contessa; I am obliged to go.'

'Already? My salutations to your mother, and Signora Olivetti, when you see her. I suppose you are going there. *A rivederci*, signor. Pietrucchio, I have won a paul — no, two; what good fortune! and a grosso!'

Clementi rose to accompany his friend to the door, and bid him an affectionate good night. Gemma never looked up till Ravelli was at the door — then she lifted her eyes and met his — their expression stung her intolerably. She sat reflecting on what had passed, and wondering what had happened to him, and Contessa Clementi pursued her game with the remark, 'Something must have gone wrong with young Ravelli — he looked perfectly *bouleversé*. Pietrucchio, it is you to play.'

Ravelli had no thoughts of going to Casa Olivetti that night. He wandered towards St. Angelo, and leant upon the parapet of the bridge, watching, without knowing that he did so, the tawny water flow beneath, eddying against the piles, and breaking the reflections from the lamps near into long shimmering trails of light. A red star was rising against the most distant houses, whose line, dark and indistinct, followed the bend of the shore. One or two boats passed under the bridge with a couple of dark figures in each, doubtless fishermen; a light burnt afar in a window over the river, as if some Hero kept watch for a Leander. Great fleecy clouds almost hid the moon, which nevertheless at intervals came out into the clear and tender blue of the sky; the night was perfect in its southern beauty, tranquil, refreshing, bringing rest and calm after the labor and heat of the day. Its breeze blew cool on the brow which Luigi bared to it, but the fevered thoughts that rushed through his mind required a mightier magic than any sweet hour of the night possessed, to quiet them. After long meditation, he uttered an audible exclamation, and starting upright, walked away without a glance at the peaceful scene around him.

Luigi shunned Palazzo Clementi and Casa Olivetti alike for some days, until his father entrusted him with some business to transact with Signor Olivetti, which obliged him to visit the latter house. He would rather have gone ten miles in another direction, and wished himself making measurements at Cività Vecchia, though under the hottest sun of the dog-days,

rather than at Casa Olivetti; but it was not worth a quarrel with old Signor Ravelli, and he went. Signor Olivetti was out, and he had to await his return; the salotto was unoccupied; Luigi gave himself up undisturbed to thoughts of no very cheering kind, and even his attitude showed his dejection. The opening of the door roused him; Imelda looked in, colored on seeing who was there, and was about to withdraw with a timid 'I beg your pardon;' but she had observed his melancholy, and instead of going, came in, and lingered to hear if he were going to say anything to her. His betrothed was the last person whom Luigi wished to see, but a glance at her, as she stood before him with her serious, child-like grace, banished his perceptible vexation, and he said, 'I am waiting for your father, but nothing is to be seen of him.'

'He will very soon be at home; Cardinal Torquati sent for him this morning. Mamma is taking her *siesta*,' said Imelda, conscious that every rule of etiquette bade her go, but detained by a stronger feeling. Luigi made some remark about the heat, to which she returned an answer without knowing what she said; then, taking her courage by both hands, as it were, asked — 'Luigi, is anything the matter?'

'What should be the matter?' he answered, much surprised.

She looked up at him with her soft wistful eyes, as if to say that she felt that something was wrong. Ravelli said, abruptly, 'Imelda, you are the last person whom I should like for a confessor — you would understand a sin too little to forgive it.'

'But unless it were against me I should have to sympathize, not forgive,' said Imelda, encouraged.

'As if you could sympathize with a crime — you little white dove, who wonder why crows are black! — I am not thinking of a trifle, such as a hasty word, but of crimes; do you know what a crime is? murder, for instance.'

'Oh, Luigi! but after all it would be the person, not the crime that I should sympathize with. Surely no one could want comfort so much as a man who had done such a dreadful thing as a murder? he would be so unhappy!'

'You are right,' said Ravelli, absently; but recollecting what he was saying, he thought he saw her start — 'Don't be alarmed, I am not speaking of myself.'

'No,' said Imelda, with a little light laugh at the idea that he could have supposed that she thought so.

'You think it impossible for me to commit such a crime? for any one?'

'It has been done,' said Imelda, low and shrinkingly, as she glanced at her mourning dress.

'Aye. Suppose I could tell you who did that deed — or suppose you were told that I did it, on the best authority? what then?'

He seemed quite serious; Imelda answered, wonderingly, 'I should not believe it; —' and then, gaining fresh courage from feeling that she was becoming his confidante, 'not if you told me so yourself.'

Was is that sympathy always had irresistible charms for Luigi, or that he sought to get rid of the depression so foreign to his nature by any means — even by confiding in Imelda? Probably both, for he exclaimed, 'Imelda, Imelda, you don't know what you are saying — you fancy all the world as peaceful as your own home — what would you think of man's life if you knew a tithe of it? Why I — now you stand by me you look at me as if you believed me as innocent as yourself — what would you say if I told you that a fortnight ago there was a man whom I hated, so that I had resolved that he or I should visit Purgatory before another day was out. Never mind who he was — no, I may as well tell you — your cousin, Lelio. If I did not murder him, I let him be murdered — there is little difference. There! you turn pale and shrink away — I knew how it would be!'

'It is so horrible to think of his death,' said Imelda, shuddering, but still remaining by Ravelli's side. 'How could you have anything to do with his death? he was stabbed.'

'Well, what reason is that?'

'He was assassinated,' repeated Imelda.

'Ah! I understand,' said Ravelli, with a look of satisfaction; 'you mean I should have tried fair fight. True — you know me better than some, whom I expected to trust me. Listen, I'll tell you how it was. That night — when — when — he was murdered — before we left the palazzo — he asked me to walk home

with him — the old story, he fancied he was dogged by some one. I only wanted an excuse for a quarrel; I insulted him, told him he was a coward: when one man says that to another you know what comes of it. We had not much to settle after that; we went down-stairs together, settled time and place, and parted. I had not gone a hundred yards when I heard a shout for help — turned back — there was a minute's scuffle between two people down the street — one fell, the other made off at full speed — I after him — I caught him before he reached a *vicolo* he was making for; he had dropped his knife, so it was fair fight between us; we wrestled together — I got him down at last, and saw his face; he was a Trasteverine — I knew him — it was the father of the boy whom Lelio struck in Villa Borghese. You had not heard of it? that was the motive; a Trasteverine never thinks a blow can be wiped out without blood. I knew that — and — let him go. I suppose I ought to have had him executed; and whether I let him escape because Lelio was my enemy, or because the way he treated that lad was so brutal, is more than I know. I went back to your cousin — he was quite dead; there was nothing to be done. When I found that, I began to think it might be a case of beheading me instead of my Trasteverine friend, if I were seen there. Not a creature came that way from the palace — they all lived in other directions. I lingered about all night till some one came by soon after dawn, saw the body, and raised an outcry. That night — I nearly went mad — I walked up and down the side streets; whenever I turned towards the Ripetta I seemed to see in a moment that black heap in the distance, and then I thought he called or stirred. I went once all the way into the Piazza di Spagna, but some demon drove me back to look at that dead man, his face turned up towards the moon — horrible! — a look to haunt one for ever — they say men always look so who die by a stab; and while I was leaning over him the wind waved a corner of his cloak — I thought he had come to life, and was looking at me with that ghastly —— Imelda, I must be mad outright to tell all this to you — poor child, what was I dreaming of?'

He passed his arm round her, and pale and trembling though

she was, she leant against him and slid her hand into his, and he kissed it as he had never yet done in all their familiar intercourse.

'If you can hear all this without renouncing me, Imelda, there is some hope for me; where could you have learned to be so charitable?'

'Thank you for telling me,' whispered Imelda.

'Tell no one!' said Ravelli hastily, as a doubt of the safety of his secret occurred to him; 'there are some who might not believe me as innocent as you do.'

'Oh no, of course I shall tell no one; mamma has always said it is wicked to betray a secret.'

'*Fidati era un buon uomo, Nontifidare è meglio*,' said Ravelli, quoting between jest and earnest a well-known proverb.

'*Chi è in sospetto è in difetto*,' answered Imelda, with more liveliness than she often ventured to show before Ravelli, who laughed and said with almost his usual light-heartedness, 'I suppose that women can keep their own secrets, if not other people's.'

'Then this shall be my very own.'

'I cannot understand why you women are not more shocked, Imelda. I should have expected you to look on me as a monster made manifest, when I tell you I intended to shoot a man as if he had been a wild beast, and that I was the cause of his death; for, but for what I said, he would not have gone home alone.'

'I think that it is very sad you should have felt so,' said Imelda, 'but you cannot be answerable for the murder; you did not believe he really had an enemy, and I have often heard papa laugh at the idea. He said it was only a proof of how important poor Lelio thought himself. And you have been so unhappy, Luigi; that is all that one can do when one has been wrong. I am sure any priest would give you absolution directly.'

'Yes, I have been unhappy, as you say, Imelda,' replied Ravelli with a sudden return of gloom. 'Heaven knows that is true. But whether I should not have brought that man to justice —'

'I think I should have let him go,' said Imelda, hesitatingly; and the idea of her doing battle with, and magnanimously releasing a ruffian who had well nigh mastered himself, almost moved Ravelli to laughter.

Signora Olivetti's entrance arrested the conversation — the first which Imelda had ever had alone with Luigi. Her mother's look of surprise reminded her of how great a breach of etiquette she had committed, and she blushed like a rose when Signora Olivetti said, 'If Luigi were not so soon to be your husband, I don't know what I should say, Imelda.'

Ravelli smiled, and the prospect did not seem at that moment unwelcome. It was the perception of this which made Signora Olivetti spare her little daughter any further reproof, and cease to question her as to what Ravelli had said to her when she found Imelda for the first time reluctant to answer.

Ravelli stood in a peculiar position with regard to Imelda; a kind of family compact had existed from her babyhood that she should be his wife, and she was now nearly sixteen, quite old enough, according to Roman notions, to be married. Signora Olivetti had divined the true reason of all the delays, which old Signor Ravelli sought to explain away, but she kept her suspicions to herself, and did not enlighten her husband; she had desired the marriage for years; Luigi was in almost every respect the husband whom she would have selected for Imelda — he was manly and spirited, he had never gambled or been dissipated; he was very different from the *blasé*, effeminate, graceful set of young men, to whom other mothers gladly gave their daughters; but Signora Olivetti would rather have seen pretty Imelda in her grave than have given her to a husband whom she could not love and respect. When she heard of Luigi's mad freaks, or his daring riding, and his beautiful horse, all of which were renowned in the races got up by the English in winter on the Campagna, she only thought she liked him all the better, even if he were a scapegrace, and that Luigi was worth all the idle, harmless youths of her acquaintance whose 'affairs of the heart' were their only employment, to the scandal of their families, and the profit of no one. Bitterly did she regret that she had ever allowed Gemma to visit Imelda, and

anxiously had she sought to marry the young countess to some one — no matter to whom — so she were but disposed of! Imelda had been the delight, the happiness of years to her; to secure her entrance into a family which would cherish her, was the aim of Signora Olivetti's life. Naturally she thought more of this than did her husband, who desired the marriage because the Ravelli were very old friends and wealthy; but his wife knew, from bitter experience, how wretched the life of a young bride might be, unless kindly received by her husband's family, under the common Roman system of bride and bridegroom living with the father and mother of the latter. Before Imelda was released from her swaddling-clothes, her mother had looked forward to giving her the meek Signora Ravelli as a mother-in-law, and vowed, silently, that this child should never go through what she herself had done.

Imelda was very fond of Signora Ravelli, and even of the irascible old father of Luigi, who, for her, had always a joke and a caress, and smoothed his brow at the sight of his little daughter-in-law elect. She found double favor in his sight, as an heiress and the child of a very old friend, and, most of all, as his own choice for Luigi; and no one could wonder at his astonished wrath, when Luigi, after having known and contentedly regarded this match for years as a thing fixed as fate, had suddenly turned round, and absolutely refused to hear of it, without assigning any reason for the change. To his mother he was more communicative, but Signora Ravelli was submissive as a slave to her husband, and would have been perfectly ill at the bare idea of opposing him, even for the sake of her darling Luigi. Moreover, though she tried to say that she liked Gemma, to please him, she could not do so. The thought of having this girl for a daughter-in-law, instead of the sweet little Imelda, positively terrified her; and, though she listened to his confidences with the most unwearied sympathy and patience, Luigi knew that she could not, and would not, help him. His own strong will was, however, quite a match for his father's, despotic and imperious as the old man was. Alternately indulged and checked by him, and invariably spoiled by his mother, Luigi had not been trained to submit in such a juncture; and fiery scenes were but too frequent in Casa Ravelli. But the father had one

strong hold over his son — without his good pleasure Luigi had not a penny in the world.

The rupture with Gemma had now led to a truce; Ravelli could not think of her without anger and bitterness; he visited Casa Olivetti constantly, and found amusement and interest in the conversation of Imelda, now that she had gained a little confidence with him. But in all his fluctuations the thought of Gemma was never long absent, causing feelings anything but gentle, and yet always present even when he lingered by Imelda's side in the window, where they often sat, under Signora Olivetti's eye, but far enough off to talk unheard. Imelda took courage to tell Luigi of her favorite occupations, her little hopes and fears, and won him sometimes to speak of himself, and those were happy evenings for both; but often his thoughts had flown to the old stormy, precious interviews snatched in peril, and lasting but a few moments, yet worth whole days of calmer pleasures, which he and Gemma used to have on the stairs of Palazzo Clementi.

And, when he left Casa Olivetti, his steps would turn towards the palace, to be withdrawn in anger and shame. He would go home to recite the *rosario* devoutly with his family; go out into society again, and his first glance round the room was to see if Gemma were present; and once they met and spoke coldly for a moment, then parted; both full of feelings that would have burst out in defiance of conventionalities and witnesses, had they given way to them for one instant; and yet no one saw more than a slight, indifferent greeting passing between them!

The shock occasioned by the glimpse which Gemma had given of her true self, was after all not strong enough effectually to detach Ravelli. He met her again in the Corso, as she went to mass with her aunt; he bowed, and passed on, but he thought her face looked pale and changed; he heard, accidentally, that she had been ill. An invitation from Clementi to spend the evening with him at the palazzo was irresistible, and that night beheld him as much Gemma's slave as ever.

The elders of the Olivetti and Ravelli families would not have taken his vacillations patiently, but that the death of so near a relative as Lelio, put Imelda's marriage out of the question for the present.

CHAPTER XX.

O patria mia, vedo le mura, e gli archi,
E le colonne, e i simulacri, e l'erme,
Torri degli avi nostri,
Ma la gloria non vedo.
LEOPARDI.

IT was so unusual for Contessa Clementi to pay a morning visit, that when she and Gemma appeared in Casa Olivetti the signora was immediately prepared to discover some important cause.

The appearance of the contessa and her daughter did not betray their poverty; they were splendidly dressed, for appearances must be kept up, and nobody could tell how they saved, and pinched themselves in food and fire to buy those silks and velvets, or that, if Gemma's shoes should get wet, she had not another pair to put on in their stead!

The ladies met with the usual embraces and salutations, and the two elder ones settled down into a quiet chat, while Gemma took a place by Imelda, holding her hand affectionately, and remarking, 'You look pale, dear little one; what have you been doing? Have you been to St. Peter's to see the bride and bridegroom? You heard how the Principe Allori and his bride went there this morning to pay their devotions before St. Peter?'

As usual in the case of this religious ceremonial the bride had been magnificently attired, and all Rome had flocked to see her jewels, and behold the new-married pair kneel before the statue of St. Peter and at the chief altars; but Imelda had not been present, and said, 'No, I hardly ever go to see such things; mamma likes staying at home.'

'So does my mamma, but I made Pietrucchio take me. Mamma always says, "Wait till you are married — then you may

go where you please." When are you to be married, dear Imelda?'

'I do not know.'

'Oh, you are in mourning now, and must wait. Is Ravelli very much vexed at such a delay?'

'I do not know.'

'How sadly you speak! What can be the matter? I saw Ravelli yesterday; he spent the evening with us, and *he* was not at all melancholy.'

'Was he with you?' asked Imelda, not feeling or comprehending the full sting which Gemma meant the words to convey, but glancing towards the seat in the window with a sigh, as she recollected Ravelli's early departure, on the pretext of an engagement. 'He was here for an hour.'

'Oh, that was why he looked so gay, of course; how good of him to come to us at all! What do you talk to him about, Imelda?'

'I don't know.'

'Books and music, I dare say? Of course you know all about such things, as Irene Mori is such a friend of yours, and your mother knows so much.'

'No, I cannot talk of such things at all.'

'But what do you say to him then? He is so ridiculous; he talks to us women, just as if we were men, about politics, and I don't know what besides, as if that was what we cared for!'

'Does he do so, except to Irene?'

'You ought to know best, I should think. I really wonder you are not a little jealous of Irene, Imelda — he is so often at her house, and talks to no one else when she is by.'

Imelda only smiled; her trusting look was for Irene, but Gemma fancied it included Luigi, and was provoked at being unable to make her innocent rival feel that he was the property of another.

'What is the signora contessa saying to mamma?' said Imelda, glad of an opportunity to approach her mother's side. 'A robbery in St. Peter's?'

The contessa was relating how, in the crowd assembled to see the bridal pair, a gentleman had found a boy picking his pocket,

and being an Englishman without education, had seized him, and conveyed him down the aisle to give him into custody; but happily a priest perceived him, forbade the policeman to touch him, and insisted on his being released.

'To lay hands on him in a sanctuary!' said the contessa indignantly; 'could you have believed such a thing? But these English heretics are mere animals; they know not how to behave. There was a scandal impossible to be imagined!'

'Indeed!' said Signora Olivetti dryly, her liberal views not quite inclining her to take the same view of the matter. 'It truly was scandalous.'

'Certainly, certainly; as Monsignore Clementi says, from attacking the throne to attacking the altar there is but one step, as we see in the history of that poor English king, and also Louis XVI. of France. He spoke so admirably about it one evening; I wish you could have heard him. But I must not say these things to you, my dear; you and your husband are liberal, I hear, and I don't know what made me think of it now—' said the contessa, much confused in her mind, as to what had recalled to her Monsignore Clementi's wisdom apropos of the robbery, 'but I am sure I had some reason for it—yet he could not have said it on hearing of this sad business, because that had not happened.'

'Doubtless it was apropos of the municipal council, or the civic guard,' said Signora Olivetti, with secret triumph and satisfaction; for these long-contested points had been gained by the Liberals at last, after a mighty struggle with the *Gregoriani*.

'I dare say it was, dear Gigia; I really know nothing about these things;' and the contessa trembled to think that she had nearly betrayed that her son and his uncle had had some intercourse of late — a fact which her brother-in-law had impressed upon her was never to be mentioned, and she obeyed implicitly, though not at all understanding the motive for secrecy. 'I live so retired — I hear nothing.'

'Your son should convert you, contessa.'

'Ah — Pietrucchio,' said the contessa, nervously. 'Yes — no — I wish instead of meddling with politics he would marry. If your dear little girl were not affianced, Gigia! And now

there is Gemma still on my hands — such a charge; what a thing that was! I shudder to remember it. Dear friend, if you should hear of any one that would do for her, you will let us know? A thousand thanks! you are too kind!'

'I assure you, my dear contessa, I am as anxious she should be well married as you can be,' said Signora Olivetti, gravely. The reason of the visit was out now.

'Thanks! thanks!' repeated the contessa; 'she loved your poor dear cousin so truly! we must try to console her, must we not? Her uncle already has proposed her, through a third person, to a certain cavaliere, but I fear this signor will not marry again yet; he has daughters as old as she, and his wife has not been dead six weeks. A man of such feeling! I have reason to believe he still weeps, if he hears her name. How is your husband, Luigia mia?'

'He is exceedingly busy; this case of the Fiasconi has employed him incessantly.'

'Ah, no one has so much business as he! There is no one I would so gladly trust with my affairs.'

The contessa paused to give her friend an opportunity of offering that Signor Ravelli should serve her if he could; but his wife had no intention of burdening him with business to be performed gratis, and which would doubtless be troublesome. She appeared to expect Contessa Clementi to speak on; so there was nothing for it, but to add, 'If he had an hour to spare some evening, I should be so happy to see him.'

'He would have been too happy, but his affairs speedily call him to Germany.'

'Really! then this little one cannot be married yet. Are you not anxious to see her settled? Daughters are such a care!'

'Not my Imelda,' replied Signora Olivetti, involuntarily drawing her child closer to her; but instantly resuming her former guarded tone. 'If I hear of anything that can be of interest to you, I will certainly advise you of it.'

'Thanks indeed, my dear friend! Now, Gemma, I cannot spare you any more time with Imelda; we must go. My respects to Signor Olivetti. *Mia cara*, could you not come to us on Sunday evening?'

'Impossible, dear contessa; it is my week at the Trinità dei Pellegrini. *Addio, addio.*'

When the visitors were gone, Signora Olivetti drew a breath of relief, and looked for Imelda, whose pensive attitude caused her to observe her long, and then ask what she was thinking of.

'Mamma, do you think I can have vexed Luigi?'

'No, my dear; what makes you fancy such a thing?'

'He was so grave last night — he has been so different lately, and went away so soon.'

It was true. Since his reconciliation with Gemma, he had been intensely annoyed by the recollection of the confidence he had reposed in Imelda, and had altered into coolness and constraint; Luigi never did anything on calculation, and followed his present impulse without remembering what the effect of the last week or two might have been on Imelda, who could not so easily forget his affectionate looks and words — signifying in truth but a passing mood, but most anxiously watched for and treasured. Her mother had marked it all, and now said, 'My dear, you must not think too much about a man's moods: he may have a thousand things in his mind which you know nothing about. All you have to do, is to make his home pleasant, and be cheerful and trustful; but never insist on knowing what is in his mind, nor expect him to think of you continually.'

'Yes,' said Imelda, submissively; but she was not satisfied, for she added, 'a man must find it tiresome, if his wife cannot care for what he does.'

'A good wife always does, my dear.'

'But she cannot, mamma, unless she has learnt how. I know nothing of politics nor of books.'

'My dear child, a husband wants rest and peace at home, not a learned wife. It is of much more importance that you should be able to teach your cook, than to read German; Luigi would not find that your being learned made his dinner comfortable!'

'But when dinner was over, mamma, he would perhaps talk to me if I were clever enough,' said Imelda, with diffidence, as if she felt that her supposition implied great vanity. 'Signor Nota reads his poems to Irene.'

'Or to Vincenzo, more likely.'

'Oh, to Irene, too; I know he once said she was his best critic.'

Signora Olivetti mused. Perhaps Imelda might be right; she had overheard what Gemma said, and though she did not believe that Ravelli talked of books or politics to her, yet it might be well if Imelda were more of a companion for him, and knew more of the world; but this was a discouraging game, and the means taken to secure Imelda's happiness threatened it more and more.

Therefore, Signora Olivetti said, 'Imelda, you think too much of what Luigi wishes.'

Her little daughter looked exceedingly surprised, and the mother continued, 'Till he is your husband, there is no need to think continually whether this and that will please him. I am afraid if papa said you were not to marry him, you would find it hard to obey cheerfully.'

'Oh, mamma, has he said so?'

'No, my dear, and I do not suppose he will; so you need not look so frightened, but you see I was right.'

'Mamma, I don't know what else to think of.'

'Your music, for instance; sit down and practise something — that *notturno*.'

Imelda obeyed instantly, but in the midst of her piece she turned round with tearful eyes —

'Indeed, I cannot help it, mamma; I was thinking then that Luigi says he is tired of this.'

'Well, never mind, my child, and don't cry, for it is not worth anything so serious; come here and tell me if you would like to go next Easter to the Pellegrini, and see the *Lavanda*? When you are old enough, I hope you will be a sister there, and help to nurse the poor sick people.'

'Oh, how pleasant that would be, mamma!' said Imelda, nestling down by her mother's side; 'when I am eighteen I may be admitted. By that time I shall be ——' she paused abruptly.

'Yes, I suppose you will be married then,' said Signora Olivetti, suppressing a sigh, and perceiving that it would be unwise

indeed to make this a forbidden subject. 'I shall have lost my little one.'

'Mamma! but you know you only say that as a joke. You know, not even dear Signora Ravelli can be quite the same as you are, though I love her so very much. I cannot think why people say that a mother and daughter-in-law are hail and tempest in a house.'

'All mothers are not like Signora Ravelli, my child; but no doubt it is often the bride's fault. You must try to make your husband's family love you; your own do so by nature, but one must win the husband's.'

'But you were very happy, mamma?'

Bitter were the recollections aroused in Signora Olivetti's mind by that innocent speech; but she replied, 'My father chose my husband, and I was quite willing to marry as he wished. You remember how kind grandmamma was to you, Imelda?'

'Oh yes,' said Imelda, quite satisfied; 'and did you read a great deal after you were married?'

'Yes, my dear.' Signora Olivetti did not add that she had taken to study, as some of her countrywomen do to flirting, to occupy her mind and aid her to forget disappointment and annoyances. Yet it might have been a useful lesson to Imelda had she heard, how at last Signora Olivetti had fully won the esteem and affection of her husband, though not till after the death of her mother-in-law, who hated her, misrepresented all she did, and exercised over her a petty tyranny which Signor Olivetti never guessed.

'I must wait then,' said Imelda.

'What books do you want to read?'

'Oh, mamma, if I might have Signor Nota's poems; they are all printed now, Irene tells me.'

'My dear child, most of them are satires, if you know what that is; you would not understand a word. Well, never mind, you may try; but I have not got them.'

'Luigi has — he can say them by heart, and so can Vincenzo and Irene. How glad I shall be when Irene comes home, and how much she has to see! Our guard! — do they not look well

in their dark blue uniforms, and the belts with each man's initials in front?'

'Yes, our civic guard make a very reputable appearance, now that they have managed to buy the uniforms; they were hardly so at first.'

'Only for a little while, till the rich ones helped the others; Luigi says that Government gave only arms, and so the poorer could not buy the dress. What a feast it was when the guard was instituted — lights, and flags, and crowds everywhere! And is it not beautiful, mamma, when the Pope blesses the people from the balcony at the Quirinal? We used only to have the benediction at Easter, but now I don't know how many times he has given it; it was so good of you and papa to take me last time.'

'It was a fine sight,' said Signora Olivetti; but there was a certain coolness in her assent, as if the name of Pio Nono no longer excited the same enthusiasm as of old.

'I shall never forget it as long as I live!' said Imelda; 'the whole piazza was a sea of people, all looking up to the palace, and among all the thousands there not a sound was heard — only the fountains. Every one seemed afraid to breathe while the Pope spoke; one man near me pushed another, and the people whispered, "Hush, hush, we are in Pio Nono's presence!" as he appeared in his white dress and scarlet mantle with all the flambeaux like an illumination round him, and then there was a shout like thunder! It was a wonderful night, mamma!'

'I wish we may never go to the Quirinal except to be blest,' said Signora Olivetti; 'they say Padre Rinaldi has lost favor of late with the Pope, and that his advice is no longer taken. Well, all this does not matter to us two; would you like to go and see the guard exercise?'

'Oh yes, yes, *cara mamma! Madre mia* — will you please ask Luigi for those poems?'

'Yes, I will recollect. Let us get ready.'

The institution of the civic guard in July, 1847, had been a great boon to the Roman ladies, who, instead of walking in the Corso or on the Pincio, went to see the guard drilled at its vari-

ous quarters; and as nearly every one had a brother, a husband, or a lover in its ranks, the ladies took a personal interest in it, called it 'Our guard,' and were never tired of rushing to their windows to see the blue uniforms and red plumes go by. The children, instead of playing at ball, and *campana*, and *maroncino*, put paper helmets on, and played at '*la Guerra Austriaca*.' Rome resounded with martial music and measured steps; in certain piazzas the echoes must have been weary of repeating the word of command, and the clang of muskets striking on the ground. But one thing was apt to make the drill somewhat unmartial; the soldiers could never by any possibility be got together till at least an hour after the right time, and a wet day was apt to send them home under umbrellas, or keep them away altogether; it was so hard to be obliged to soil the new uniforms which they had bought for themselves. They had not yet had any experience of real war; though how gallantly they fought when it came all the world knows; and that the Romans were no fairweather soldiers when they fought for house and hearth in the siege of their city. The spirit which both Mazzini and the *Papiste* had secretly fostered for their own purposes, and which had threatened to break into rebellion, now took its legitimate direction; the Romans looked eagerly forward to joining in the war of independence, and the party of whom Leone had in past years been the leader, and had in fact created, to a man were eager to join it at once. To this all his labors had long been directed, and a universal hope was springing up that the Pope would formally send his troops to aid in the good cause. This was a hope in which all men might join — even the *Papiste* could be patriots here.

An animated scene presented itself to Imelda and her mother. The piazza was full of troops, volunteers from every class in Rome, mostly gallant youths rejoicing in this outlet to their martial ardor. Many were of high rank; the colonels of several regiments were princes, but the substantial middle class furnished the greater number. They turned proud, laughing looks to the bevy of ladies who walked up and down outside the piazza, or stood in groups, talking to each other, watching the manœuvres, and exchanging in the pauses smiles with their friends among

the guard. Each passer by, man, woman, or child, lingered to watch the beloved civic guard, and exclaimed, '*Quanto son carini! quanto son belli! belli, belli, davvero!*' and similar expressions of delight, as if all derived a personal gratification from the gay and gallant aspect of their soldiers.

'*Halte!*'

The exercise ended, the soldiers dispersed; Clementi, Leone, and Ravelli all came up to Signora Olivetti and Imelda, and stood talking for a while. Imelda heard with joy that Irene would very speedily return, and said to Leone, 'I had a letter from her last week, and she says she is going to sing at the Teatro Regio. I am half sorry; I do not like her to appear since that terrible night.'

Leone's face darkened at the recollection. 'Vincenzo wrote me word of it, signorina; he is satisfied, and if Mademoiselle Mori did not sing here, she would go elsewhere, and you would lose her.'

'And you are satisfied too?' asked Imelda, shyly and low. 'She never told me, but people say you have a right to object if you choose.'

'I do not mind confiding our engagement to you, and I only wonder she did not,' said Leone, while his peculiarly sweet smile banished his previous quiet, stern look, and replaced it with sunshine. 'We merely do not announce it, because long engagements such as ours are so unusual.'

Imelda forgot to answer, because she heard her mother saying, 'Why should you send the book, Luigi? Can you not bring it this evening?'

'I and Clementi are going to Circolo Nota, and then into the Trastevere.'

'Bring it to-morrow, then. Perhaps Signor Nota will give us the pleasure of his company?'

Leone willingly agreed. He too was going to the Circolo, a kind of club which had several meeting places in Rome, where the members read the newspapers and discussed politics — a very great novelty in Rome. It had been instituted with the full approval of Government, who would now gladly have put it down, had they dared; but these were not days for taking away a priv-

ilege once granted. Nota had planned and founded the one which bore his name, and its politics were guided by him, and therefore much more sensible and moderate than those of some others, which were fast becoming mere hotbeds of sedition.

As the young men were about to bid Signora Olivetti good day, a sound began to rise, full half a mile off, indistinct yet full, like a flood, coming from the direction of the Vatican, and a multitude of voices blended into one all along the streets — '*Pio Nono, Pio Nono — il Papa — viva, vi-va!*'

'Oh, we shall see the Pope,' cried Imelda, and presently, surrounded by the usual escort, appeared the coach of the Pope, who leaned forward with a serene, well-pleased aspect, and raised his hand to bless the people, all kneeling as he passed. A hurricane of applause pursued it, and every one looked delighted and cheerful, as if the sight of Pio Nono had brightened the whole day. His popularity had little decreased as yet with the populace.

Nota and his two friends entered the Circolo together, and were warmly welcomed by the assembly, which was large and increasing. Reforms and popular education were the subjects brought forward by Nota, and warmly discussed, taking, at last, the turn of arguing what future Government might be desirable for Rome. A lay element had been introduced by Pio Nono into the hitherto strictly ecclesiastical ministry, but so slowly and partially, that it rather tantalised, than satisfied, the unruly and impatient people. The discussion grew vehement; Leone rose and spoke with effect and moderation; Clementi followed.

'My friends, I am about to draw a picture of a certain century; it matters little which or when. It was spent in terror, suspicion, pain. No man could trust his friend, his wife, his servant; all or each might be a spy, might deliver him to death, or imprisonment; was encouraged to do this, and profited by it. There was a spy in every chamber, and an executioner at each man's door. A word, a look, a false and anonymous accusation brought death on high and low. This man is rich; he seeks popularity; he would rebel. Let him die and his estates be confiscated. This one lives retired; he studies unlawful sciences — he is a magician — he is discontented. Let him pursue his

meditations in prison! Anguish and dread filled Rome. My friends, do I see you imagining that I speak of a time within your own recollections? that I can mean a Christian century, when the Vicar of the apostles sits on the throne of St. Peter? Out on such profane thoughts; no holy prelate, or abbot, or friar could exist in such days as those; we know well how meek and lowly, how wedded to poverty they are, and ever have been. We know how closely the successors of St. Peter have copied his great example. Fie! my friends, are you dreaming, that you apply my words so rashly! Leave it to the heretics to say

> ' " Quegli ch' usurpa in terra il luogo mio,
> Il luogo mio, il luogo mio che vaca
> Nella presenza del Figliuol di Dio!
> Fatto ha del cimiterio mio cloaca! "

It cannot be a Christian, who has had fair means of knowing the truth, who says such scandalous words; it must be some Catharo, or Hussite, or Lutheran! Far from me be such profanity! I spoke of the reign of Domitian!'

The whole assembly was thrilled by the audacious irony of this speech, and of the description which, if not applicable to the mild rule of Pio Nono, might have served without altering a word for the reigns when Sanfedism triumphed; and another speaker instantly started up to point out, that where the whole power was concentrated in the hands of one man, the safety of the people must necessarily be in peril — a Commodus might follow an Aurelius, and safety belonged to a republic alone.

Again Nota replied, and the witchery of his eloquence silenced the malcontents, and called forth shouts of applause; and the discussion closed, but the stinging speech of Clementi was reported all over Rome.

'Come, Leone, before we separate, improvise us something!' was next the cry. He looked round, smiling; the poet felt himself a king. Many voices proposed subjects for his muse; he chose from them 'Orlando Avogado at Genoa' — leant his head on his hand for a moment in thought, and then looked up with the kindling expression of one whose soul is full of a great subject. He sang of Genoa, ready to perish among nations, racked with divisions — of the alarm bell, which suddenly called her

citizens by night to the great piazza, where they found no enemy, but their venerable archbishop and his clergy, who, holding aloft the crucifix, bade them be at peace together for His sake who died for them. The measured rhyme grew low and mournful, and then rose into passionate earnestness, as Leone told of Avogado, standing weeping before the throng, while he declared that the honor of his dead ancestors forbade him to forgive their and his hereditary foes — ay, though all Genoa should perish by his refusal. After a moment's pause, the *improvvisatore* continued speaking in the person of Genoa, in words that must lose half their force and beauty when translated from their own idiom: 'Son, thou refusest life to thy mother! thou wouldst slay her who gave thee birth, for thou hast no mother so near to thee as I; and I bid thee go to the tombs of the dead, and hearken what their voices say to thee, and then return! And he went, and listened in thy Campo Santo and the bones of the dead were stirred, and their voices bade him be no more an Avogado, but an Italian!'

'Oh, my friends!' Leone continued with energy, 'is there no lesson for us here? Are we but Romans — but Florentines — but Sardinians? When shall we learn to call ourselves Italians? Our country calls us, once the queen of kingdoms, long a bondslave — she holds out her chained hands imploringly to her children! Let us lay aside our feuds, our miserable private interests, let us forth and fight for her; little matter whether the crowns we win be laurel and parsley — wreaths of victory, or the hyacinth and cypress — garlands of the dead. Let Italy's children answer her voice; let Rome as of old be foremost in the combat, and the patriot's heart shall beat faster, and the tyrant tremble in his stronghold, as he hears the multitude advancing to deliver her. But O friends, O brethren, beware lest false hopes, meaner motives, dazzle you and lead you aside; be generous, and salvation is at hand; be self-seeking madmen, and these amber and rosy lights which flush the horizon will prove no dawn of a glorious day, but the treacherous splendor and the gorgeous coloring which precede the sunset and the storm.'

Leone's voice was exquisitely melodious as well as powerful, and always exercised a singular spell over his audience. While he recited, there was intense silence, every face turned towards

him; each sentiment, each passion he described, reflected on the countenances of his listeners; and as he ended, out burst applause, unanimous, deafening, on all sides. Oh southern audience and southern poet, where are now the hearts that beat so high at the name of Italy? Are those charmed lays quite forgotten, or do some yet cherish their remembrance and murmur them, as they pass a lowly grave in the Roman Campo Santo?

Leone left the *Circolo* in company with Ravelli and one or two more, to seek a less refined *réunion*, at a *locanda* or tavern in the Trastevere, frequented by the lower class, hitherto the bitter enemy of the *bourgeoisie*, with which it had always been at war, and had derided at every possible opportunity. But the middle class had of late studiously conciliated it, and mingled as much as possible with it; and a friendly feeling sprang up which has lasted ever since. Leone improvised for the populace as willingly as for the *Circolo*, and was literally idolized by the Trasteverini, themselves orators and poets by nature. Clementi did not accompany them; he sought a small secret meeting, where were Cecchi and a few more of the same politics, whose debates were carried on in mystery and darkness — a secret society very unlike Leone's. These men met, and exasperated themselves by recalling past wrongs and predicting future oppression, and the dream of a republic was ever in their minds.

Their movements were duly reported to his uncle, who thus was kept well acquainted with the views and purposes of both the moderate and ultra-liberals, so as to be able to forge, with his colleagues, means of opposition to them, counteracting their schemes on the one hand, and the measures suggested by the Pope on the other. Monsignore Clementi and his party formed, as it were, a dense resisting atmosphere, through which the reforms commanded by Pio Nono, and ardently desired by the liberals, could not penetrate, or at all events struggled so slowly that they had more the air of tardy concessions than wise and original measures. The Pope and a few enlightened counsellors, such as Padre Rinaldi, might debate and suggest reforms, but they were suffered to drop, or strenuously resisted, by the Ministers who should have carried them out; and the Romans began to wonder whether Pio Nono were sincere, or whether the blame

rested with those about him, and a cry had more than once been heard of 'Long reign Pio Nono, but Pio Nono *alone!*' words equally unpleasing to the Ministers and to the gentle Pope, whose timid conscientiousness was ever taking alarm, and was ever appealed to by men who sought to terrify him from the paths of reform.

Ravelli told Leone, as they walked together, of Signora Olivetti's request concerning the poems, and confided to him that he had given a copy to Gemma, which by some chance had fallen into the hands of Monsignore Clementi, who had carried it off. Ravelli was brimful of delight at the idea of the little volume being submitted to an assembly of Monsignore Clementi's friends, and drew an imaginary sketch of their aspects and their comments as the worthy prelate read them aloud, having first sprinkled them with holy water!

A copy was duly sent to Casa Olivetti, and Imelda passed an afternoon between studying it, and a MS. collection of proverbs, that she might be well prepared for the evening, when there was to be a *società*. It was Signora Olivetti's usual evening for receiving guests, and the younger ones usually passed the time in some game, now and then of *oca*, or *gatto cieco* or blind man's buff, but more often in what was quieter and more instructive, said their mothers — namely, proverbs.

The party always met rather early, and seldom staid long, on account of Signor Olivetti's known dislike to late hours; and seldom any but the same set met together. They were all intimate, and nearly all of the middle class, with the exception of the Clementi. There was frequently dancing, and always more or less of card playing, and those who assembled here every Thursday, also met continually at each other's houses on the remaining days of the week.

The room began to fill; Imelda was soon surrounded by friends of her own age; Leone entered, and exchanged a pleasant look and a few confidential words with her respecting a letter from Irene — their friendship had progressed wonderfully since the day before. A wave of sound, in which particular voices were absorbed, began to rise, but still Ravelli had not come, though his father and mother were there, and when he appeared,

his look did not promise much for Imelda; nor did he approach Gemma. Signora Olivetti perceived that there had been a quarrel with her, or else a battle in Casa Ravelli; she could not decide which. He stood conversing with a knot of gentlemen about a late riot, peremptorily put down by the civic guard, and then began to inquire whether Signor Olivetti really intended to go to Germany.

'If I had any choice, I should not go now, especially for an indefinite time,' said Signor Olivetti; 'it is the last place where a Roman is likely to be welcome; but this is business which ——' the rest was inaudible beyond where they stood. Words floated round by which the general tenor of conversation through the room might be guessed — 'young Italy,' 'Mazzini,' 'the municipal council,' 'deputies,' 'Austrians,' 'Jesuits,' with the pantomime and vehemence inseparable from the conversation of Italians, especially at such a time, when all Rome was in the utmost excitement, resolute to expel the Jesuits, and looking breathlessly for great news from Sardinia.

When Signor Olivetti turned to speak to a new comer, Ravelli threw himself into an ardent discussion on Neapolitan policy, and the ever-burning offence of the Austrians in Ferrara. Imelda was near enough to hear, and he suddenly perceived her extreme interest in the debate, and, breaking it off, soon came to a seat by her side. It was very soothing to perceive that he was welcome — very refreshing after a stormy interview with Gemma, who had delighted in trying her power over him to the utmost, from the day that he had returned to her a willing slave. He was always lured back after every quarrel; but, when angry and out of patience with her and himself, the innocent, unconscious flattery in Imelda's glad looks was irresistible.

'So you are patriotic enough to like politics,' said he, with a smile, half guessing it was only because he was one of the speakers.

'Sometimes,' said Imelda. 'Oh, I like listening very often; you know papa and mamma talk a great deal to each other about the times. Luigi, I have read Signor Nota's poems.'

'You! what could induce you? you don't mean that you understand them?'

'I like this,' said Imelda, laying her finger on a page of the volume.

'Oh, that — I forgot it. Yes, it is very pretty,' said Ravelli, turning the leaves, and looking at one poem after another, while his eyes sparkled as he recognised each familiar war cry, '*Italia Ancella*,' '*Italia libera*,' '*Il Bilancio della Morte*.' 'Ah, this is grand!' he broke out, repeating verse after verse by heart — 'that is strong — one could fight on that!' then, recollecting to whom he was speaking, he laughed, and said, 'I forgot that they could not be much in your line.'

Gemma had perceived that the two were in conversation, and took a chair by Imelda; but her aunt called her to sing, being thereto instigated by Signora Olivetti, and with a clouded brow she went to the piano. Imelda said, 'I did like those verses, Luigi; Gemma told me you often talk of such things, and indeed I care for them too.'

'When did Gemma talk to you of me?'

He asked so quickly and sternly that Imelda was thoroughly frightened, and replied entreatingly, 'I did not mean to say anything wrong.'

'I did not say that you had,' answered Luigi, disarmed by the pleading voice, and unable to help smiling. 'How are you to go through the world, silly child, if you think so much of a hasty tone?'

His manner was almost caressing, and she answered gaily, and repeated what Gemma had said. Luigi's mental comment was that no woman could resist tormenting another, but he resented, inconsistently enough, Gemma's conduct towards Imelda. Perhaps the reason of his displeasure might be the one he gave to himself, that he had the same regard for Imelda, as for a sister.

She was happy now, yet there was something wanting to her; he spoke of her, never of himself. One word of confidence would have been worth all these attentions, but she hardly knew what it was that she missed. When Gemma had finished her song she approached again, but was intercepted by Leone, who quietly enjoyed the knowledge that she was furious at being detained by him in conversation, and that he was giving Imelda

some more happy moments. He met Signora Olivetti's eye, and the mutual slight smile which they involuntarily exchanged, showed that each comprehended the other's tactics; and that Leone had made her his fast friend.

In a little while all the party were summoned to play at proverbs, and the dialogue between Imelda and Luigi ceased; all the groups were merged into a circle, every one took the name of a flower or fruit; and Leone began the game by throwing a handkerchief to a lady who had chosen to be a lily, with the words —

'From my hand, my bird has fled
To this lily's breast, and said —'

'*Cosa disse?* what did it say?' demanded the lily; and Leone answered quick as light, '*Veronese, bella mano,*' quoting a well-known proverb, amid great applause; for the lady was of Verona, and really had a pretty hand. Without losing an instant she passed the handkerchief with the same form of words to Signor Olivetti, and in answer to his '*Cosa disse?*' maliciously alluded to his proposed journey with 'a rolling stone gathers no moss;' and the war of proverbs and laughter grew so fast and furious, that the merits of the game, as far as quietness counted, were extremely problematical.

CHAPTER XXI.

Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear!
O! welcome guest, though unexpected here.
COWPER.

On his way home from his business, the evening before Irene returned to Rome, Leone was joined by Count Clementi, as he turned into a street full of shops, where old furniture, curiosities, and pictures were sold. They lingered to look in at the windows and to laugh at the vile copies or worthless originals, which were exposed to catch the eye and empty the purse of unwary foreigners.

'Alas, Beatrice Cenci!' said Clementi, 'if you had committed all the crimes of which you are accused, sufficient punishment is it to be caricatured in every picture-magazine. And, behold Titian's unwearied daughter still holding her casket, of which no charitable person comes to relieve her. And who shall say our prospects are not cheerful, when Guido's Hope looks out from every corner! Here is a variety, Heaven be thanked — a martyrdom; a wretch with his mouth open and frogs tumbling out! No, I am wrong; it is an exorcism, and doubtless the frogs represent the evil spirits of covetousness and ambition, which the priest is about to appropriate to himself.'

'Martyrdom! exorcism! don't you see the likeness?' exclaimed Leone.

'Likeness! to what imp of darkness? Dante might have seen this unfortunate, perhaps; but I do not own him as an acquaintance, for he surely is in purgatory, and my visit to that region is yet to make.'

'Are you blind, count? look here — this painting far back!'

'I see,' cried Clementi, approaching closer. 'Irene! this is no chance likeness! extraordinary! the same, and yet no, this face is less noble, more beautiful, perhaps.'

'It is doubtless the portrait of her mother; see! the Sora costume; this is one of the lost pictures,' said Leone, entering the shop in haste. The owner civilly gave the painting into his hands, but observed that he had sold it that morning.

'Sold! I must have it at any price; see here is the name, V. Moore, and the date — how came this into your hands?'

Even the tempting offer of any price was vain, to the extreme and visible regret of the dealer; an English gentleman had bought it, and it was to be sent the next day to the Hôtel de Russie. It had been bought from the Monte di Pietà, and hung long on hand — only that morning the picture dealer had esteemed himself in special luck at having sold it, and here was Leone come to embitter his satisfaction with his 'any price.'

'It is a good picture; the coloring so rich, and the handling free — a valuable work, indeed,' said he, regretfully, his estimation of it rising every moment.

Count Clementi asked the Englishman's name, and obtained his card.

'What brings him here at this time of year? If he had come in the spring he must have heard Mademoiselle Mori sing, and no doubt would in courtesy have given this up,' he remarked; but the color came into Leone's olive cheek, and he said quickly,

'It is not a gift to Mademoiselle Mori, it is the picture of Irene's mother that I desire.'

'Is it really the portrait of Mademoiselle Mori's mother?' asked the dealer with great interest. '*Per Bacco!* had I known that, I might have sold it long ago; it should have been where all could see it, instead of in a lumber room whence I only brought it yesterday. I would have offered it to Mademoiselle Mori myself. Ah, signori! What a voice! what grace! what sentiment! Unfortunate that I am to know the value of this picture too late!'

Count Clementi frowned: he would have gladly hidden Irene from all eyes save his own, and each time, that he was forced to

remember she belonged to public life, caused him a sharp pang, while Leone was proud to hear the talents of his promised bride acknowledged, and said cordially, 'At least I will tell her of your good wishes, my friend.'

'Stay,' said Clementi, looking at the card, 'let me think — I believe I know a way of getting at this man, if you will trust me with the matter.'

Leone gladly acquiesced, and Count Clementi lost no time in calling at the Hôtel de Russie and explaining as much as was necessary of the story to the Englishman, who had only bought the picture because he wanted two or three to furnish his walls in England, and readily gave it up, assuring the count he did not value it in the least, with true English bluntness, contrasting amusingly with the Italian's polished courtesy. The painting was carried to Cecchi's abode, and hung up by Leone under the delighted superintendence of the padrona.

How did Leone guess the exact hour at which Mrs. Dalzell's carriage would drive into the quadrangle of Palazzo Clementi next day? or, if he saw it at a distance, how could he manage to be at the foot of the great staircase, ready to receive Irene as she sprang lightly out? Madame Marriotti had been deposited at her own residence; Mrs. Dalzell alighted after Irene, and lastly Vincenzo, and they stood exchanging welcomes; but Leone saw that Vincenzo was leaning against the wall for support, and that he looked very thin and invalid-like, though the meeting had called a flush to his cheek.

'Come, we shall talk better up-stairs,' said Leone, putting his arm round him; 'I am going to take you there. What have you been doing to yourself, Vincenzino?'

'This naughty boy has been ill, or we should have been here a fortnight ago,' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'he was so anxious to come that the doctor and I could hardly manage him; as for Irene, she had the strongest persuasion that he required his native air.'

'Why did not Irene tell me, Vincenzo?' said Leone, looking at him with a mixture of affection and reproach in his bright hazel eyes. 'I would have been with you long ago.'

'I would not let her; I meant to get well forthwith,' replied Vincenzo, smiling, as they slowly ascended the stairs, and stopped

to rest in the first corridor. 'There is no great matter amiss.' But before they reached the third, Leone's support was increased to almost carrying him. Irene had sprung up-stairs many minutes before to see that the door was open and his room ready for him, and being espied by Carmela, who, defying all rules, was chattering at the door to the baker's boy, and by Menica, looking out of the kitchen window; both ran to meet her with joyous and familiar welcomes, to which was soon added Madama Cecchi's, as the up-raised voices reached her in her bed-room.

'Ah! my signorina! *ben tornata* — welcome back! welcome as rain in August! How well she looks! where are Vincenzo and Lady Dally?' her nearest approach to Mrs. Dalzell's name. 'Pieces of macaroni, that you are! go along —' this was to the two maids, who, however, did not stir a step. '*Gazze ladre*, magpies! always staring about; ah, here, here they are!'

'Now you are not to let Vincenzo stop one minute,' said Irene; 'he is sadly tired;' and her bright face became over-clouded, as she watched his slow progress along the *loggia*.

'*Ma cos' è!* what is it? ill!' exclaimed Madama Cecchi, in dismay. '*Cos' è, signorina mia?*'

Vincenzo was not too weary to pause and answer the welcome of the two girls; and Mrs. Dalzell also stopped to speak to them, for she had grown sufficiently Italian to comprehend that servants consider themselves part of the family, and entitled to share in its joys and griefs. Before Leone knew what Madama Cecchi was about, she had pounced on Vincenzo, and conveyed him into his sitting-room, laying him down on the sofa laughing and submissive, and then vanishing with a promptitude that showed some further scheme for his benefit to be in her mind. He lay, tired and happy, on the couch, which felt so comfortably familiar, and let Irene arrange it as she liked. She was so much occupied with him that at first she had eyes for nothing else; until standing behind his sofa, while she softly put the hair away from his forehead, she was commencing something which ended in a breathless 'Leone! Leone!' The cry made Vincenzo look up hastily to follow her glance. He actually started upright! '*Il ritratto!* our picture! — our mother!'

'Leone, this is your doing,' said Irene, with glistening eyes. 'It must be — don't let it be any one else's —'

'Mine in part, Irene; but you must thank Count Clementi, too; I must tell you how I found it.'

'Eh, eh! what do they say to this fine *beffana?*' asked Madama Cecchi, returning with a tray of coffee; 'there, I had to give up seeing the discovery because I can't trust that *figliaccia* Carmela to make a cup of coffee, though I set it to boil myself. Now, signor, I made it, and speaking with respect, it is very good — so drink.'

While the travellers ate and drank, Leone told the history of the picture amid an interest more easily imagined than described. All the circumstances were told and retold and commented on, while the brother and sister looked at the portrait, as if they could think of nothing else. Something of both father and mother seemed restored to them. Not till the first excitement had passed could they let even Mrs. Dalzell share their rejoicing; and she did not attempt to mingle in the rapid questions and answers, but silently convinced herself that, in this work at all events, Vincent Moore had shown himself an excellent artist. Both his children bore a little likeness to it; Irene now resembled it more than she had done as a child, but her countenance was of a nobler cast, with more soul, more intellect, and less actual beauty, than that of her young mother. It was strange to think that the daughter was now older than the mother had been, when that lovely face was drawn; hard to believe that an original had existed and passed away without leaving a trace in the world, which had gone on without her; for though we all know that we shall die to be forgotten, it is almost impossible to realize oblivion, and utter separation from the world.

'Now, I shall not say a word about the civic guard or anything else to-night,' said Irene, 'or Vincenzo will get excited, and be too tired to sleep; so you must say good night, Leone.'

'I suppose I must not be selfish, then,' said Leone.

'Yes, indeed; I don't want her — Irene, if you did read to me to-night, I could not attend. Don't come — and why should I go to bed? You are growing intolerably tyrannical! you will be busy all to-morrow with the theatre affairs, and not have a moment for Leone.'

'Meanwhile time is passing, Vincenzino.'

'It has been doing that ever since the flood. Well, I will submit, if you will stay with the signor here.'

'The signor is going to be your valet,' said Leone; 'I shall not let him excite himself, Irene.'

'Oh, I can trust you,' said Irene, with a bright, confiding look, and, while Leone helped Vincenzo to his room, which opened out of the one where they sat, she staid and listened as Mrs. Dalzell talked.

She said, 'He is less tired than I expected; this journey being over is a great weight off my mind; I quite dreaded it. Now, Leone will look after him, and no one is more gentle and handy with an invalid, and it will be a relief to you to know he will look in and cheer Vincenzo when you must be busy. How well Leone looks! I always like seeing him with Vincenzo; the friendship of men, when it is real, always strikes me as singularly beautiful. When I was a child there was no Old Testament story I loved so much as that of Jonathan and David.'

'I do not think though that it is really "passing the love of women,"' said the betrothed bride.

'Of women for women, perhaps, Irene; but after all it has a feminine element in it. You will not quarrel with me for what I am going to say now, at all events — that Ravelli and Leone are another pair whom I particularly enjoy; Ravelli is such a fine fellow — so completely the perfection of animal health and spirits — while Leone is like a picture of Titian's or Morone's — just one of those southern faces, dark complexioned, with such a vivid, intense expression, and yet almost melancholy in repose.'

Leone deserved all that she said; he had that suppleness of limb which makes every motion graceful; the middle stature and the taper hands of the southern nations of Europe, and the look of power — of intellect — that indescribable air which gives to the paintings of which she had spoken, their individuality, their patrician look. Irene's eyes thanked her, and induced her to add, 'Do you know, Leone has often reminded me of Raphael; I think he has just the same brave, gentle, generous spirit, the same power of winning love; I could fancy that it might be said of him also, "that he never had an enemy."'

'Ah, signora, the world is worse now than it was in Raphael's time; Leone has a great many enemies.'

The outer bell rang, and there entered Count Clementi.

'Irene!' he exclaimed, with a flash of unconcealed delight; then, turning to Mrs. Dalzell — 'Unreasonable that I am, signora! but I could not wait till to-morrow to hear how my friends are. Where is Vincenzo?'

Irene explained, and something passed on the events which had taken place during her absence. All concerning Gemma's marriage had been reported by letter, but still seemed so dark and mysterious, that she wanted to ask innumerable questions. Clementi enlightened her very little, though he had long since wormed out enough to show him the truth; he was so acute, that a single word was enough to reveal to him a whole plot. He paid but a short visit.

As he rose to take leave, Irene said earnestly, 'There is something for which Leone tells me I must partly thank you, count, if I only knew how' — she glanced at the painting.

'I too have a mother,' replied Clementi, with feeling, 'and I knew this portrait must be inestimable to you.'

'It is, and that is all the thanks I can give you.'

'Sometimes think of me as well as of Leone, when you look at it,' he answered, with one quickly-withdrawn look, which told her that the attachment which he had never named to her since she had confided to him her engagement to Leone, was as fervid as ever. She could not be angry at that unconscious betrayal — unconscious she deemed it — and knowing, deep in her own heart, the bliss of love returned, what could she do but pity him? His feelings towards her were, indeed, intense and genuine, and his usual entire suppression of them gave them double emphasis when revealed. Both ladies were silent when he was gone; Mrs. Dalzell confirmed in an old suspicion, Irene pensive. She looked up with glad animation when Leone returned, reporting Vincenzo to be asleep.

'You are a capital nurse,' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'he has had miserable nights of late from incessant restlessness, almost worse than pain; and now, after the journey which we all dreaded, you have mesmerised him into going quietly to sleep. Now,

Signor Nota, let us hear how public events are progressing; even Tuscany was growing disquieted before we left it, and I quite pitied an Austrian when he appeared in Florence.'

'Leone! I have something to show you!' Irene went away, and returned waving a green banner, whereon were embroidered the Papal arms. 'See, my contribution to your Circolo; I chose the color of Hope — do you approve? Mind you carry it yourself the very first time that Circolo Nota marches out in procession.'

All that Leone had to tell showed how much the popular movement had deepened and widened; how strong was the love of independence, the national spirit awakening throughout Italy, one that would not merely break out in partial revolts to be quenched in blood, and leaving no traces except in heavier chains and broken hearts; but a strong, united, vigorous effort in a great cause, which should swallow up minor jealousies. Irene brought Tuscan news to compare with Roman, and asked eagerly how the endeavor to conciliate the *basso ceto* prospered.

'Our alliance is striking root deep and wide,' said Leone; 'there are noble fellows among that class; it is the wealthy — who care for nothing but getting more money — that are our plague spot; men who calculate whether they shall gain a farthing, or lose it, by some event on which a nation's destiny depends — who live in the midst of earthquakes, and buy, and sell, and eat, and drink without so much as knowing that men's houses are falling on their heads, and the judgment is at hand. We cannot touch such as these. If we tell them we are starving, they will give us no gold; if we bid them rise up, for we do battle for life, will they arm themselves? No, for they cannot comprehend what we say.'

'They have taken no interest in Italy's past, so they cannot understand the present,' said Irene.

'Exactly — a man cannot put his heart into a cause that he knows nothing about — the present would be a blank, or rather we should seem madmen, if we were set down in the midst of it without the past, out of which it has grown. We must turn to the people, for those above them are deaf and blind.'

'The people! fickle as the waves! Your own proverb says

"He who builds on the people builds on the sand,"' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'There is rock below. No great change was ever effected by rulers alone; Rienzi freed Rome, so did Arnold of Brescia, but only because the hearts of the people were with them.'

'Ah, Leone, what ominous examples!'

'No, Rienzi did not fail till the masses distrusted him; our Romans only want a leader — they have a gallant spirit in them still. Unmanageable fellows!' said Leone, smiling, as a recollection occurred to him; 'I'll tell you what happened the other day, Irene; Luigi and I were in the Trastevere at a *bettola* [a tavern], such is the company I keep in your absence. The Trasteverini came dropping in, with their wives and *dame* — fine brown hardy fellows, and women to match — and they made us signori very welcome; one sang and played the mandoline, then another — then I must improvise something. I thought of a legend I had read somewhere of armed warriors in a magic sleep, spell-bound, till the drawing of a sword and blowing of a horn should wake them' —

'"Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn."'

quoted Mrs. Dalzell.

'Yes, that was the moral, as we blow our horn pretty loudly just now; but the pith of the story was the warriors sleeping till the hour to serve their country should come. In the midst, a stone was flung through the window among us. The whole party had been listening as if they were spell-bound too — one woman would have made a fine study; her great black eyes wide open, her finger on her lips, gazing, panting with excitement — but that stone was worse than the horn; up they all started infuriated, vowing it was an insult to us, the signori, and rushing pell-mell towards the door. Ravelli was next to it, he threw himself against it, and barred the way like a rock, while he shouted out above the uproar, that it was only a sign that some fellow was jealous of his mistress coming without him to the *bettola*. I made them a speech, and all sat down, and began to talk again, seeming pacified; but first one slipped out, then another, and another, and returned as if nothing had happened. I saw they had

fetched their knives, and kept them ready up their sleeves, but nothing more happened that they could twist into an affront to us, and I thought it was all over; but somehow they discovered who had flung the stone, and that night there was such a fray that the guard had to march out and interfere.'

'Well, now I must bid you good night,' said Mrs. Dalzell, 'and Irene must rest, I think.' She shook hands and went to her own apartment, attended to her door by Leone; but he could not resist coming back for a few last words with Irene, who asked if he had lately seen his married sister, and if her husband had been less overbearing to him.

He shook his head and a cloud of unspeakable sadness overshadowed his face. 'These politics made a terrible breach in families. You remember the sort of welcome I used to receive in that house?'

'Oh yes — whoever might be there — however large the society might be — there was always a clapping of hands and rejoicing when you came in.'

'It is not so now. He idolizes Assunta, or I should have been forbidden the house long ago. There was a moment when I thought it had come to that, but I kept silence for Assunta's sake and it passed over, and now they never name politics when I am present — you may guess how easy and agreeable the conversation is — and always a crowd of priests there. But for Assunta's sake I should never go near the place, and even she has been taught to look on me with grief and doubt. Some day she will think herself only too fortunate, if she may disown and forget her brother altogether. But I have my Irene! Ah, Irene, you little know how hard it was to keep silence those long two years, when every day showed me more and more what you were worth!'

'We could not spare those two years,' said Irene, 'and at the time I hardly felt what danger we were all in, though they were dreadful days; sometimes I had to go to my singing lesson, while I was wondering why you had not been near us, and longing for Cecchi to come in and assure us that nothing had happened. If I had foreseen all the suspense and anxiety beforehand, I should never have had courage for it!'

'Irene *mia*, how many of us would have courage to live, if we could foresee what our lives would be? But I never contemplated burdening you with our secrets, only Vincenzo could not keep a secret from you!'

'Do you remember that evening when I had been making so many copies of your essay on the "Unity of States" — and one could not be found! I never knew what terror was till then; I counted my copies till I was bewildered, and still one was gone! I was convinced that it had been left about, and seized by some spy.'

'I found the poor little conspirator nearly rigid with terror,' said Leone, with affectionate playfulness; 'not daring to alarm Vincenzo, and waiting for Cecchi's return to confess.'

'And you comforted her, and found the sheet of paper crumpled up by Tevere in his basket!' said Irene. 'It does not sound much in the telling, and yet what misery I felt!'

'I very nearly betrayed myself that night,' said Leone. 'There was nothing for it but to fly, and hear no more thanks.'

'I often wondered how I could forget everything but my music, when my lesson time came,' said Irene. 'All the haunting fear and anxiety —'

'By the same power as that which makes you a good actress,' said Leone; 'you throw yourself entirely into whatever you are doing.'

Irene's holiday was over. The next day brought a multitude of affairs; household matters, theatre-business, and a visit to Madame Marriotti to see how she was after her journey, and tranquillize her nerves, much disturbed by anxiety regarding a hundred trifles, which were finally entrusted to Irene's care, while Madame Marriotti sat up in bed, her beloved ermine cloak round her, and a handkerchief of cardinal's lace on her head, directing, questioning, and fidgeting, and more than occupying both her maid and Irene, who could hardly contrive to get released in time for luncheon. She found Vincenzo just up, and taking a survey of his plants; Velvet Cap, over the way, had already spied him out, and was exchanging a pantomime of welcome with him across the street; and the canary, which had gone with them to Florence, sang loudly, as if in challenge to his friends,

and the songsters opposite were not slow to answer. Vincenzo was soon weary, and let Irene help him to the sofa, and give him what he called 'an idle book,' though he ejaculated, 'What a thing it is to be so good for nothing! I wonder why people are glad to have one back!'

Leone thought him so much less well than when he left Rome, that he lingered in the evening, till Vincenzo had gone to bed, to have a private consultation about him with Irene, who said,

'He is less well; the Florentine doctor said he had worked too hard at his carving, and must give it up, for the present at all events. He was so good and patient about it — Mrs. Dalzell said it was a beautiful lesson to every one; but it was a hard trial, and the worst of it is, he has not been able to begin again. I thought how terrible it would be to me to be forbidden to sing — I should not have been as good about it as he!'

'I think there is but one thing that he allows to harass him,' said Leone, 'the fear of becoming dependent, and that must be doubly strong now, poor dear fellow! I know he sometimes troubles himself on the score of being an obstacle in the way of our marriage. This miserable money, Irene!'

Irene gave one deep, suppressed sigh. Their marriage seemed a very distant prospect. Leone looked at her, his lips unclosed, then shut again; and, whatever it were that he had been about to say, it was not spoken.

CHAPTER XXII.

A voice rang through the olive wood with sudden trumpet's power:
'We rise on all our hills! come forth! 'tis thy country's gathering hour.
There's a gleam of spears by every stream, in each deep, winding dell:
Come forth, young man! bid to thy home a brief and proud farewell!'
And a maiden's fond adieu was heard, though deep yet brief and low;
'In the vigil, in the conflict, love, my prayer shall with thee go.'

MRS. HEMANS.

Ire gran furie homeco.
Ira di patria oppressa, amor de'miei,
E vendetta la terza; si, vendetta.

MONTI.

ANGRY voices were raised outside the sitting-room door — uplifted — vehement — those of Madama Cecchi and Carmela, one in accusation, the other in justification. Evidently the baker's boy had been detected in holding converse with the damsel. Tevere might have been used by this time to similar domestic hurricanes, but his temper appeared upset by the noise, and he barked loudly at a distance.

'I tell you it shall not be done,' was distinctly heard; 'here is Menica, who is twice as pretty as you — what am I saying! you know you are as ugly as sin — and when do you see her chattering to any one? If she sees a friend, she salutes and goes by, but you — you have friends among the *vettiurni*, the milkmen, the lacqueys —'

'It is very hard,' was returned in sobbing accents, 'if I may not speak to a friend; I wish I were in my own country, where Battista came to talk to me every night for a year under my window, and no one cried scandal; it is the custom there for *promessi sposi*, signora, and I never —'

'Don't talk to me of *promessi sposi*, evil jay — my house is a monastery, and next week you shall go. Menica, Menica, where are you? is not that girl come in?'

Madama Cecchi retreated towards the kitchen, and then a shout of amazement resounded, and the next moment she dragged Menica into Vincenzo's sitting-room, laughing, blushing, and shorn of the shining fair tresses, which had been her glory, and the envy of all her female friends.

'Why, Menica!' cried the two occupants of the room, in amazement, 'what has happened?'

'She has sold them,' gasped Madama Cecchi, between tears and laughter — 'the foolish thing has sold her hair! Tell them, Menica *mia*.'

'I had nothing else to give, signor; nothing at all, signorina,' said Menica, addressing herself alternately to Leone and Irene; 'they offered me really a folly for my ear-rings, and I must have something to give to the war, and there is the money, Signor Nota,' and she handed over a few pauls to him. I hate the Austrians, and I could not bear to hear that the religious orders had given thousands of pounds, and our nobles were bringing ever so much more, and Emilia sold her necklace, and Sigismunda her *spille;* and one this, and another that, while I had nothing for Italy. I only wish I could fight; it would do me good to kill an Austrian;' and therewith she retired, smoothing down with one hand the short thick golden hair, which was all that remained of her long plaits, and followed by the padrona.

Some laughter followed their departure, but it was, like Madama Cecchi's, allied to tears; the girl's sacrifice, of what was most precious to her, touched these Italian hearts, and Leone said, 'Would that we had a few more as devotedly in earnest!'

He leant his head upon his hand, and Irene waited, her heart beating slower as she divined what was coming. Both had looked serious all the morning, though Leone usually had great enjoyment of a holiday, and Irene had been telling him good news; the Academy of St. Cecilia had offered her a diploma, an honor always welcome to musicians, and giving them a certain *prestige*, yet she relapsed into silence and pensiveness, and Leone seemed inclined to follow her example, till the entrance of Me-

nica had roused them both, only to make them more thoughtful than before.

'We always said, that our individual happiness should not interfere with our duty to our country,' said Leone, as he met the eyes which always had such a true, confiding expression to answer him with — 'we knew then, that our words would be put to the proof — '

'I know,' said Irene, seeing that he shrank from inflicting a blow upon her, for which, however, she was already prepared; 'you do not think I would hold you back?'

'No, I know you would not. You would have worked me a banner, and buckled on my armor, had we lived in the old times, in spite of your peace-meaning name, my Irene.'

'I did work you a banner,' she answered, with her sweet, brave smile, 'and you shall take it with the volunteers if you like, Leone. "*Segui tua stella.*"'

He did not know that she had heard a whisper of the fact that the volunteer corps was really formed, and speedily to go; he asked, 'Who told you, my dearest?'

'Cecchi named it last night. You were the first to enrol yourself, Leone!'

'Did he tell you that too?'

'No, I guessed it, because I should have done the same. I will not be afraid, Leone; I know we shall triumph, if only we are brave and self-denying. We women cannot fight, but we will not hold back those who can.'

'No man ought to think of himself in these days,' said Leone; 'and if he were the veriest coward, the spirit of the women might inspire him. Irene, I *could* not hear of Milan rising, of all Lombardy struggling for freedom, and sit still here! I have been hoping and planning for this corps for months; it was proposed again last night, by Stefanini, and settled in a few minutes; he had proposed it a few hours before to the Ministry. But there is a point that I have kept to discuss with you. All that I have is yours — yesterday, news of an unexpected legacy reached me — a considerable one, enough to make us independent — how much of it can we spare for our soldiers?'

'All, if necessary. Government is too poor to supply half

that is wanted. We must not be like that duchess in the siege of Naples, who hid all her gold and jewels till every one was starving, and then repented and brought it — and Queen Joanna thanked her, and said, a bit of bread would be worth more!'

'And our marriage, Irene?'

She looked up, and met the look fixed on her face; but her eyes sank, she blushed deeply, and silence ensued. It was hard to put away happiness indefinitely, hard to feel that they had not enough for themselves and for Italy.

'Irene, you must help me,' said Leone, hurriedly, 'I have hardly dared to think of this.'

She could not summon an answer at first, then she exclaimed, 'Oh, Leone, where would your esteem be, if you found that I thought of ourselves first and of duty last? You might be happy for a little — a very little — while, but soon you would feel that you had not acted up to your own standard, and that I was the cause, and the end would be misery. Whether you let me see it or not, I should know it; but what folly to talk in this way! if you wanted me to help you to decide, you would not be Leone. I know how it must be.'

'Thank you, my dear Irene, you are always true to yourself,' said Leone, with proud, yet half-mournful affection. 'But after all, how long are we to endure this uncertainty? I have shrunk from letting you share my poverty, but I have not courage to wait an indefinite time — poverty or riches would seem alike to me shared with you, but I am asking you to give up fame, Irene.'

Her smile said he might ask what he would, and he eagerly pursued — 'When I return then, rich or poor, you will be my wife, Irene? If it were only not the forbidden time now —'

'It is impossible now,' said Irene; for Lent had come round again, and not only would no Roman willingly marry in that season, but a union between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant was illegal in the Papal States, and could not have been solemnized nearer than Florence.

They talked on with the perfect confidence in each other, that only entire esteem, as well as love, can give; and she sat thinking, long after he had discovered that business called him

away. There was a blank feeling, now that the excitement was lessened, but no regret; she had not reluctantly yielded what she knew she could not keep; two noble hearts had freely sacrificed their brightest hopes to Italy that day.

Vincenzo presently came in with a part which she was to perform, when the *Teatro Regio* should re-open, and called her attention to a point which had struck him; and she attended, and tried at the piano the effect which he proposed; but when he was satisfied, and, having settled himself on the sofa, asked, 'And what have you and Leone settled this morning? Is the table-cover to be green or red?' she felt that she must tell him what had passed. She would gladly have hidden from him a sacrifice which she knew would grieve him, but she had never had a secret from Vincenzo, and could not begin now. Perhaps it was not easy to speak steadily, but her voice was so serious as she replied, 'We cannot afford luxuries for ourselves now,' that he laughed heartily.

'Luxuries, my dear? are we to have no cloth to our table? I suppose you will soon call the table itself a luxury, and insist upon our dining on the floor!'

'Not quite, but we have been agreeing that every one who can, ought to contribute to the war. Do you know, Menica has actually cut off her beautiful hair, that she may have something to give.'

'Why, I call that heroic, considering who did it!'

'We should have had almost as little to give, if Leone had not just had a legacy left to him.'

'Leone! My dear girl, why did you not tell me at once? Irene, I should be so happy if I knew that he had a right to protect you — you little know how anxious I have been lately. This is the legacy he once spoke of to me!'

'I think it would be as wrong and selfish to think only of marrying and buying and selling now, as ever it was in old days,' said Irene, striving to speak composedly.

'What!' exclaimed Vincenzo, raising himself up hastily to look at the face bent over her sheet of music.

'He always said that our own hopes should come second to Italy,' said Irene, looking up, with dew on her long eyelashes,

but with a brave countenance. 'I know it is right — I wish it — it must be so.'

'Second! you shall come second to no one, with my leave!' said Vincenzo, with a spark of impatience; 'if Leone do not know how to value you — but what nonsense! Is Don Quixote going to contribute his whole fortune to the war, or what?'

'If necessary; but that is not all, Vincenzo, the volunteer corps is really organized.'

'Ah, I understand.' Vincenzo sat silent, beating his fingers on his book for some minutes, and then resumed in a different tone. 'Irene, I beg your pardon and Leone's too; it is only that I had not the sense to admire him. He could not do otherwise, being Leone — he is always consistent. Yes, he has lived for this day. I should have felt at once that he was right, had any one but you been concerned. Tell me all about it; I suppose the matter is to be laid before the Pope?'

'Leone has been asked to head a deputation to the Pope, and Padre Rinaldi says Pio Nono approves; and of course he must know. He told Leone privately that he should go too, as chaplain. The Ministry have decided on forming four regiments, and on offering the command to Durando.'

'When do they go?'

'The time is not fixed; they were to discuss it again to-night. Leone and Luigi were the first to offer themselves when Prince Stefanini proposed the corps at the Circolo.'

'Ah, Luigi would be ready enough; he would be delighted to face death any day for the mere excitement; but Leone would walk up to the cannon's mouth in cold blood for conscience' sake — I guess there is a difference! I wonder whether Signor Ravelli consented, or found that his consent was not asked.'

'Oh, Vincenzo, he is a very fair liberal.'

'Ay, I know, but he may not be ready to spare his son. What good luck Luigi will think it! But what will Gemma say?'

'She has spell-bound him, and if he wake one minute, he is entranced again the next,' said Irene, impatiently and despairingly; 'if they could be married for three weeks, he would find out how astonishingly infatuated he is.'

'Clementi will not be able to go unless the contessa gets better; poor fellow, he has looked so much harassed since her illness, that I would give anything to comfort him. Have you heard how she is to-day?'

'The same — a bad night. Poor Imelda can hardly have heard yet that Luigi is going. I shall make time to see her to-day, if Mrs. Dalzell will leave me there when she goes for her drive. There she is — will you tell her, Vincenzino? I really must study this part, and I had better take it to my room, for some one else will be coming presently.'

There must have been something unusual in Irene's face, for Mrs. Dalzell asked, as soon as she was gone, what had occurred. Vincenzo told her; and, when Irene returned, she could speak quite calmly about it.

She went to the padrona's sitting-room in the afternoon, and found Cecchi acting carpenter, and nailing up the white window-curtains; he turned round on his elevation half way up a ladder to greet her, asked if Leone had been there, and described the animated scene in the Circolo Nota when the volunteer corps was proposed; his wife added her voice, and Irene found it was well that she had taught herself to feel on this subject as Leone felt, for it was in every mind and on every mouth; nothing was heard of but preparations and contributions; volunteers came forward from every rank, princes, nobles, and commoners; 12,000 men were speedily collected, and two nephews of the Pope were among them; prelates who could not join in person gave large sums, and provided horses for the troops; the Pope publicly expressed his approval, and published a beautiful address to the Italian people, which raised his popularity again to the highest degree; and Rome and her States were in a perfect effervescence of fervor and patriotism. Well might Austria tremble for her power, when Italy rose up as one man, with the gallant Charles Albert at her head, in a war of independence; well might all hearts beat high, and foresee a glorious future!

All private affairs became necessarily of a secondary interest, and yet went on much as usual, since nothing claims attention more tyrannically; and men went to their business, and women attended to their households in the midst of all the excitement,

having to turn from the great, and all-important public events even to some such matter as the finding a new servant.

This was an affliction which came upon Madama Cecchi amongst others; Carmela was dismissed, and another had to be found in her place. Carmela recalled one evening to Mrs. Dalzell's mind that she was going, by exchanging the customary '*Felice sera, signora; non occor, altro?*' for '*Addio, signora, non ritorno più!*' She looked very merry; leaving her place in disgrace did not seem to weigh on her spirits. Cecchi came in later, with the tea-kettle, attired in a long dressing-gown and velvet cap — his usual in-doors costume, and was invited to stay to tea with Mrs. Dalzell, which he laughingly declined, but lingered to exchange a few words with his lodger, as he always liked to do, but never had a chance of effecting when his wife was near. Mrs. Dalzell asked if they had found a servant in Carmela's place. He lifted his shoulders by way of reply, and arched his eyebrows, saying, 'My wife saw a woman this morning, who says that she lived eleven years with a family here, was treated as their daughter in a long illness, married from their house — she wants a place.'

'That sounds very promising.'

He gave a peculiar half laugh. 'If it be true, signora; who can say?'

'But she gave you a reference?'

'Yes, yes, she gave us a reference, but masters and mistresses do not like to tell the truth; they are afraid. The best thing would be to oblige every servant to bring a written character from the police; we shall pass that measure some day.'

'I suppose this person cannot have invented such a story?'

'Who knows?' repeated Cecchi, with the same laugh. 'We shall see.'

'Where is Signora Cecchi to-night?'

'In society.'

'Alone? You never go, signor.'

He shook his head. He had been mixed up in some past political troubles, and marked out as a victim. His employment had been taken from him, the fine imposed on him had made him almost a beggar; and the suspense, the terror, and indescribable

harass of the whole affair had thrown him into a long illness, from which he rose a dangerous, embittered man, brooding over his wrongs, and cherishing a sullen, intense hatred against the Government which had ruined him. He refused pertinaciously to enter into society again, and for more than a year after his misfortunes had fled to his room at the first sound of a visitor's voice. A friend had succeeded in finding for him some employment, which had saved him from both starvation and becoming a monomaniac, a state to which enforced idleness and fear of the future was fast bringing him. He had a cowed look as if the iron hand of power were still griping him; ordinarily he would not speak of the past, but sat silent, taking no part in any conversation; but sometimes a chance word would rouse him into such fierce passion, that even his wife, herself a fiery spirit, was terrified, and had privately besought Mrs. Dalzell never to name politics to him, if any one were present.

'I go to fetch my wife,' was his reply to Mrs. Dalzell; 'that suffices.'

'Have you heard this article in the English papers, signor? Pray sit down, and as Irene is not here, I must translate it myself. What do you say to this?'

'Italy can act without foreign aid,' was Cecchi's comment as she concluded. 'She must rely on herself; we want nothing, but that the other European Powers should not interfere; we have a right to be governed as we please. We want no Kings or Popes here — let us have a republic, say I. Popes — every abuse that we groan under arises from the Popes; how much blood has their temporal power cost! and as for the spiritual, the Popedom is a worn-out mass of deceit and iniquity, which is crumbling down from its own decrepitude.'

'But you need not reject friendly foreign interference,' said Mrs. Dalzell, who had by no means intended to rouse the Red Republican spirit.

'Intervention — intervention! we had the same thing in '31 — fighting. Childish weakness, treachery! What became of Menotti? where is Zucchi? They put their trust in princes; ask the Austrians where they are — the Austrians, I say, who have always played us false; ask the French, to whom we are

eternally trusting! Italy must be her own deliverer and protector, if ever she is to hold up her head among nations. We have been like serpents too long; they have said to us, "Dust thou shalt eat," and dust we have eaten, and have crawled before them; but a day of account comes, and our tyrants shall learn that we can sting as well as crawl. Then let those beware who lurk among us to betray — traitors like that turncoat Pellegrini Rossi; it would be a good deed to end that man's course!'

A fierce and evil spirit gleamed in the eye of this man, usually so subdued and silent. Mrs. Dalzell answered seriously, 'I know what some of you say of Count Rossi; but the reason of your prejudice I cannot understand, though I have heard you and Signor Nota argue the point. Exiled for Italy's sake, liberal, brave, he returns here under the most favorable auspices —'

'French, French, he is French at heart; it will soon come out plainly.'

The door-bell rang; Menica opened it, and Leone was heard speaking. The slight interruption cooled Cecchi at once; he relapsed into his usual quiescent mood; the fire was quenched, the menacing accent gone, he rose, courteously wished his lodger good night, and went back to his accounts and his pipe in the kitchen, where he habitually sat, never entering his wife's sitting-room till an hour when all chance of visitors was over.

Madama Cecchi went to inquire the new domestic's character the next day; when she returned she came to Mrs. Dalzell.

'Ah, signora! I hear you have rung twice, and Menica was out *a far le spese* — to buy some little matters, and I was absent, too; it is not once in a year that I leave the house, as you know, and it lacerates my heart to think you should have been inconvenienced.'

'It does not matter, I assure you.'

'I beg a thousand pardons for myself and Menica, but I went to get this woman's character; ah, Heaven! Heaven! these servants! Not a word of truth — she lived three months with these people, and left them because she was a thief.'

'Is it possible?'

'Too true, signora; that is the way with them all. She supposed, no doubt, that I should not take the trouble to ask her

character. When I see her to-morrow — ah! see, I bought this silk to make me a dress; does it please you? I shall send for Maria, the milliner, to-night, and make her bring her patterns. Hark — there's our guard!'

She rushed to the window, flung open its two valves, and leant out; Menica had already flown to that in the ante-room; Vincenzo nodded to Madama Cecchi from his; heads had crowded to those opposite, as if the roll of the drum and the long lines of soldiers marching by were a novelty.

'There!' said Madama Cecchi, withdrawing half her person which had been extended forth, and heaving a sigh, 'soon they will be gone! I shall ever regret that Signor Leone's marriage cannot take place at present, but our country must come first; is it not true?'

'Yes, and happily Irene quite agrees with you.'

'*Che brava giovane* — what an angel she is! a man for understanding, and a nun for modesty! What talent! and a character! Say Mademoiselle Mori, and you have said everything! Ah, may she never suffer what I did when she is married! I loved my husband too well — I suffered whatever he did! I never speak of it now, but I feel the pain of that time always — here!' she said, sorrowfully, pressing her hand on her heart. 'These men — they strive, and they labor, and they are occupied; but we women sit at home and weep! Signora, no one can imagine what I underwent from seeing how it would end; and at last he grew morose, harsh, thin as a spectre; he would tell me nothing, but I knew that our affairs went ill. Finally, he was summoned before the tribunal; he came home as white as my chemise, his cousin with him; Nino shut himself up in his own room, and Sandro came to tell me the sentence. When I heard it, I fell down as if I had been dead! And then, how I went from friend to friend, seeking to get some one to help us, but none — none — all failed me. I waited in ante-chambers, I walked miles, I wrote, I entreated, I prayed — in vain! *Sordo come una campana* — and I dared not for my life let my husband know what I was doing; he lay ill, he asked no questions. I was out at dawn and at dusk; I moved heaven and earth, but to no purpose — we had an enemy. Ah, that cardinal, that wild beast who drinks the

blood of the Roman people — Heaven reward him as he treated me! I went to seek him with friends, and alone — (I who never had crossed the piazza by myself)! and at all hours! Once I thought I should be admitted, but at the last moment the head of the Collegio Romano entered, and we were all dismissed, I and the other aching hearts that were waiting and trembling in his ante-room! I say no more — we will not speak of this,' concluded Madama Cecchi, her flashing glance quenched in tears. 'Never speak of it to me, signora, and never, I beseech of you, tell my husband that I named it. He knows nothing of all that I tried to do. Who is this coming? the Moorish lady, Madame Marriotti?'

She went to meet 'the little Moorish lady,' as she always called Madame Marriotti from her Spanish complexion. Madame Marriotti was by birth an Andalusian, and her singularly dark complexion formed a great contrast to that of the blue-eyed matron, who was truly Roman in her portliness and dignity.

Madame Marriotti came to inquire why she had not seen Irene for two days, though she had written a note to summon her. Mrs. Dalzell said that Irene had been very busy packing a knapsack, and providing all that it was to contain.

'Ah! now her head will be fuller of young Nota than ever! I am thankful he is going away, however; for I do believe she would have been so excessively foolish as to marry him — and then, adieu, Fame!'

'You will have to make up your mind to that, at last, madame!'

'We shall see. I know that you think me more like an old raven than a song bird for croaking my forebodings, and that child, Irene, only smiles at them; but I am old enough to remember the beginnings of several Popes' reigns. Take Gregory XVI. — there was nothing talked of then but "the new Era" that was beginning; and what came of that? Now, I dare say matters might go on improving; Pio Nono seems sincere; but there is no truth in the clergy, no patience in the people! They are mere parvenus in liberty — don't know how to bear it meekly; they were not born to it. My belief is, that we shall

have a revolution, things will be turned upside down, and then settle just as they used to be; there will be exiles and fines on all sides; Nota will certainly be a marked man, and may think himself lucky if he get away before he is clapped into prison. Irene will then have an engagement at Vienna or London; and he may join her, if they really must marry.'

Mrs. Dalzell could not help laughing at the coolness with which Madame Marriotti settled this agreeable finale to reform and romance, and asked if she had mentioned it to Irene.

'Yes, I did,' said Madame Marriotti, pensively. 'Yes, I told her that I was negotiating an engagement for her at Vienna, as she would want one when her present one at the Teatro Regio expires. Yes, I am sure that I told her.'

'And what did she say?'

'I do not know,' said Madame Marriotti, in a very dreamy tone; and Mrs. Dalzell thought it probable that she had only half expressed her meaning to Irene, and had taken it for granted that her auditor knew the whole of the train of thought by instinct, which she was very apt to suppose, thereby often creating remarkable confusion, and always amazed at the stupidity of those who were perplexed by her.

Irene, coming in while she yet spoke, answered all reproaches with a smile, but the next instant, tears filled the girl's eyes, she knelt down, and, hiding her face on Mrs. Dalzell's neck, said, in a broken voice, 'They go next week — I have just heard it.'

'Ah, child, child, why did you fall in love!' said Madame Marriotti, reproachfully yet sympathizing, while Mrs. Dalzell caressed and soothed Irene, and said,

'Irene could not have loved any one nobler or better worth these tears, dear madame! She does not regret having given her heart away!'

Irene raised her head and pressed her kind friend's hand, and perceiving that Madame Marriotti was regarding her with moistened eyes, she said, 'I am not going to be so foolish again; it is over now, you need not scold me, *cara maestra!*'

There were few houses in Rome where a parting was not impending, and scarcely any parent or lover sought to hold back son or friend, but in Casa Ravelli was war; its master would not

hear of his son joining the volunteers. Vainly did Luigi urge and implore, declaring that he should be marked as a coward for ever did he draw back after having taken such part in the preparations; Signor Ravelli was obstinate, stormed, menaced, and besought him that he would be content to stay at home, finally going to bed, there to shed a flood of tears, quite despairing and '*avvilito*' like a child, but stubborn as ever; and to make sure of keeping his son, he cut off his allowance, and bribed all the authorities to refuse the youth permission to leave Rome. Luigi's high spirit always found home life tame, and now it was unbearable to lose this opportunity of seeing the world, putting patriotism out of the question; and when he saw other young men about to march to the war of independence, and heard the hopes, fears, and praises that resounded on all sides, he grew desperate with vexation. His mother could not bear to see his rage, she secretly pledged her ear-rings to fill his purse, and gave her consent to his departure, though it almost broke her heart to part with him; but still his father remained obstinate. Luigi sought Signor Olivetti and urged him to use his influence; Signor Olivetti laughed at him, and asked if he did not know his father well enough to be aware, that no one could talk him over. There was no help to be had in this quarter. Luigi fairly stamped with vexation, and vowed he would turn brigand sooner than not go, and Imelda forgot her own terror in the prospect of losing him, and said, 'I am so sorry, Luigi; I know how you want to go!'

'All the walls of Rome shall not keep me here,' exclaimed Luigi; 'stay idle here and be branded for a coward? I will turn priest if I stay!'

He betook himself to the authorities, but his father had been beforehand with him, and all the answer he got to his impetuous remonstrances was, '*E impossibile, impossibile, impossibilissimo!*'

Irene had need of all her spirit as the day of parting approached; she was thankful that Lent had closed the theatres, and made this a season of comparative leisure, for it would have been a severe task to attend rehearsal, and to appear in public night after night. Her perfect health enabled her to shake off the effects of wakefulness, a new thing to her — or of sleep so

full of dreams as to be little refreshment. From one of these she woke one morning feverish, breathless, — feeling, before her mind was collected enough to think, that the day of departure was come. Vincenzo remembered it too, and made an effort, of late unusual to him, to rise early, that he might breakfast with Leone, who presently came in, looking so cheerful and soldier-like in his travelling costume, that Vincenzo's spirits rose, he ceased to watch Irene anxiously, and breakfast passed amid much talk of even a gay kind.

The muster-call sounded suddenly, Leone started up — Vincenzo grasped his hand. It was a parting as of dearly loved brothers; Vincenzo murmured low, 'Leone, Leone, I ought to be going too!' and Leone's last word to him was, 'Think of her!'

Irene had turned away that she might not see or hear; she waited for Leone at the door. That was a hard parting; a strange beating filled her ears, her voice was lost. He clasped her hands in his, and gazed in her face, as if he could not let her go, and she could make no answer to his 'Irene *mia!*' A whole volume of love and trust was contained in those two words. The muster call sounded again, one close clasp, one kiss, and he was gone, while yet she stood with her hands locked together; without word or sign — he turned at the end of the corridor, looked back, and sprang again to her side. 'Irene! one word! I cannot part in this way!' Then she found strength to say, 'It is for our country — good-bye!'

Madama Cecchi and Menica came out to add their farewell. Leone had not another instant to spare; he waved a hasty adieu to them, gave one last look to Irene, and darted down the stairs.

He saw Irene again in the throng in the Piazza del Popolo, now with a bright smile for him. So sanguine were all, so ardent in the cause, that, though nearly every one had relations among the volunteers, yet when the hour came for them to set forth, all Rome assembled in the piazza as if for a feast. There was barely room for the soldiers when they marched in, and halted to listen to an oration from one of their chaplains. It was a grand scene, and it passed in a beautiful spot.

Already the light green of spring foliage began to clothe the Pincian Hill; the belt of cypresses, on the other side of the square, rose up against an intensely blue sky; the fountains sent gushes of clear water into the air. The three long streets leading into the piazza, at all times arteries of traffic, poured in a dense crowd, which struggled to enter the square, already so full that not a single additional spectator could press in among those already swarming there. The windows, and roofs of houses, and even of churches, were lined with gazers, all hushed into profound attention and silence, as through the piazza rang out the voice of the preacher. It ceased; the word of command to march was given — then the tempest of feeling broke loose, and amid *vivas*, waving handkerchiefs, tears, and a tumult of sound that pursued them far on their way, the volunteers marched out of Rome, every note of their martial music, every flutter of their banners, every sunbeam that glinted on their weapons, accompanied by prouder and yet prouder steps, and hearts beating higher with exultation, as each moment seemed to bring them nearer to their destination of Ferrara — Ferrara, soon to be set free from the foreign invader! Afterwards — the Pope indeed had ordered that his troops were not to fight except in a defensive war; but neither general, nor soldiers, nor even chaplains, realized that they were not speedily to join the brave King of Sardinia. The gentle voice of Pio Nono was lost amid the beatings of Italian hearts, burning to join in the general war for freedom, and too eager for considering whether he who called himself the representative of the Prince of Peace could send his subjects to dye their hands in the blood of men whom he regarded as truly his children as themselves.

No one had seen, though many had looked for, Luigi Ravelli in the piazza, and speculation was rife among his friends as to what had become of him. The enigma was solved ere they had gone many miles by the appearance of a rider dashing across the Campagna on a magnificent horse. The headlong speed and the noble animal instantly revealed the rider, and almost at the same instant as when many voices together were proclaiming it, Luigi galloped up and waved his hand triumphantly to his friends. As he could not get leave to join, he came without it;

and he was so general a favorite, and the eager desire to join Charles Albert was so universal, that both the general and the officers of Luigi's regiment shut their eyes to his escapade, and he took his place joyously among the volunteers.

His was not, however, a thoroughly light heart, for the thought of Gemma weighed upon it. If he had had stormy scenes with his father, those with Gemma had been worse; at the first hint of his intention she broke into entreaties, reproaches; she even threw herself on her knees as she implored him to remain, and vainly he now soothed her like a child, and then appealed to her reason; all she knew or cared was, that he meant to leave her. He could hardly endure to face her misery; she thought he was wavering, but she was mistaken — she could make him wretched, but not faithless to the cause in which he gloried; and she recognised the limit of her power, and her tears were replaced by a sullen mood, which ended in a parting on both sides in anger, equally soon repented of; but Luigi had no means of letting her know that her image was with him in the march and the camp and the battle-field, nor she of telling him that she had tortured herself into absolute illness, and was almost wrought up to the desperate design of flying from her home to seek him. In absence, all her power over him revived; he forgot how she had exasperated him, and forgot, too, the tearful eyes, the trembling lips that he had kissed, and bade remember him, when in the height of his anger with Gemma he had sought Casa Olivetti to bid Imelda farewell.

She did remember him. She thought of him in all her occupations by day, and whispered his name in her prayers each night. There were heartfelt supplications uttered for dear ones in peril that Lent by those who could but remain behind and pray for them.

A great preacher was missed from the pulpit, which he had filled in former Lenten days; Padre Rinaldi was gone as one of the chaplains of the volunteers, and his very presence was enough to raise their enthusiasm to the utmost; but sorely was he missed at the Roman Court, where his opinions and advice had been constantly sought by Pio Nono, who was left to the contrary influence of the *Gregoriani*.

Padre Rinaldi was one of the few priests to whom the reforms were welcome. When others opposed a silent, stubborn resistance, suffering the new measures to drop unheeded, he seized and carried them out unflinchingly ; he saw in them a commencement of other reforms, not temporal, but spiritual, calculated to restore his Church to her ancient majesty, and to give back to her ministers that pure and unworldly spirit which of old had rendered their enormous power a benefit to the world, who, feeling they were better than itself, had bowed before them. No man felt the corruption of his class, of his Church, so strongly as did Padre Rinaldi; none contemplated such sweeping measures of reform, nor cherished such magnificent visions of what the Roman Church might again become, with her purity restored, and all the world again united in one faith.

Dreams of the anchorite ! dreams only; but had others been as stern to themselves, as holy as he, different indeed would have been the fate of Rome. His eloquence all knew, but at the extent of his austerity and sanctity men only guessed. They regarded him with reverence almost as great as that felt in the middle ages for the celebrated Dominican of Vicenza, at whose bidding tyrants laid down their arms, prisoners were freed, laws altered. Like that Fra Giovanni, Padre Rinaldi would have rebuked undaunted an *Eccelino* in his own hall. But those who lived at ease, those who were rich and luxurious among the clergy, would gladly have silenced this stern monitor, who seemed to the people a very prophet, and whose life and doctrines were a thorn rankling in their sides. In earlier days Padre Rinaldi might have shared the fate of Arnold of Brescia or Savonarola ; luckily for him the stake had gone out of fashion, and the friend of the Pope could not be lodged in the dungeons of the Inquisition ; but could the feelings of the whole body of the Florentine clergy towards that rude Fra Girolamo be compared with those of the Roman abbots and priests towards Rinaldi, little difference would be detected in the shades of dread and hatred. But the people listened to him gladly.

All the chaplains were not like him, and strange indeed was it to hear one (whose name became afterwards but too well known) preach turbulent communist doctrines, declaim against the rich,

abase rulers, from the King of Naples to the Pope, and lead and urge the people to revolution. The political storm thickened and spread; the Italian Governments were neither strong enough to pardon nor to punish, and skilful had he need to be who stood at the helm in that tempestuous year 1848.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Conrad. — What dost thou, daughter?
Elizabeth. — I have been washing these poor people's feet.
Con. — A wise humiliation.
Eliz. — So I meant it. *The Saint's Tragedy.*

Signora Olivetti was a wise mother. She did not discourage Imelda from speaking of Ravelli, but she tried to give her new subjects of thought. She obtained leave to take her occasionally to the hospital for convalescents of the Trinità de' Pellegrini, to which sisterhood she herself belonged, and attended in her regular turn one week in every month, going there for many hours each day, remaining all night if wanted, and assisting at all other times when an unusual press of work called for additional nurses. Ladies of all ranks belong to the sisterhood, and men of all classes to the brotherhood of this institution, which is intended for patients newly dismissed from other hospitals, that they may there recover strength ere they return to their homes; and, likewise, as the name imports, as a resting place for pilgrims. Imelda could not be enrolled as a *sorella* until she was eighteen, but meanwhile her mother asked, and obtained the favor of being allowed to take her to the Trinità, and encouraged her to assist the patients after they had left the hospital.

She likewise did all in her power to encourage her daughter's intimacy with Irene, for whom she had a high esteem. Her friendship and countenance were valuable to the young cantatrice, for Signora Olivetti was a person of consideration in Rome. Imelda joyfully availed herself of every opportunity of meeting her friend, and all through Lent Irene was comparatively at liberty, and could accompany her and Mrs. Dalzell to many churches and galleries which she had never before seen.

Mrs. Dalzell was to return to England immediately after East-

er, and though she had lived in Rome long enough to consider it almost a home, she still found much that was new to her, and almost as much to visit and revisit, as though she had been the merest stranger. The *lavanda*, at the Trinità de' Pellegrini was a ceremonial which she had never yet witnessed, and Imelda, who had grown very fond of her, besought her to attend, and see all the sisterhood assembled to wait on the pilgrims. Mrs. Dalzell promised to go on Easter Eve, on condition that Imelda would come to Palazzo Clementi to accompany her; and Signora Olivetti gave a ready consent, for she had assured herself long before that there was nothing but good to be gained from the English lady, and that neither Mrs. Dalzell, Irene, nor Vincenzo ever approached the subject of religion with her child.

Imelda arrived, on Easter Eve, under the care of a servant, who saw her safely into the hands of Madama Cecchi. It was Mrs. Dalzell's tea time, but her sitting-room was empty. '*Ecco eccoli*,' said the padrona, opening the door of Vincenzo's apartment, and there accordingly Imelda found her friends, standing in contemplation of three paintings, intended for what is technically called a diptych. The brush that executed them might still have been stiff with paint, they were so evidently new; but for sentiment and delicacy of color, they might have been the work of Fra Angelico. There were three compartments, the two side ones intended to close if necessary over the centre, where the Virgin Mother was depicted, holding her Child; herself a perfect model of womanly grace, modesty, and humility — the Infant Saviour nestling His little Head against her with childlike love, amid which the expression of something divine was beautifully given. On each of the outer compartments an angel in pale blue robes was drawn; on the panel, which would be placed above the centre one, another angel knelt, bending forward and scattering flowers.

The three persons looking at these lovely paintings turned as Imelda came in, and welcomed her; she noticed immediately how animated Vincenzo looked, and exclaimed, 'Oh, Vincenzo, are these yours? How very, very beautiful — *quanto è caro quest' angelo!* Where did they come from?'

'Mine! No, an old friend, a Sir Arthur Laurie, who was at

Rome last Easter, has had them painted for him by a German; he is just come back — he gave me some work last year. Are they not exquisite? Well, they are to stand over a small altar, and I am to carve the canopy and frame — is not that good? He brought them here, because (he says) he knows they will inspire me!'

'He seems to have been right,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'What a long time it is since you undertook a long piece of work, Vincenzo! You are a great deal better to-night, are you not?' said Imelda.

'Quite well, to-night. See, I shall have a pointed canopy to throw into shadow this angel scattering flowers; the middle panel is to have a slender border of leaves, I think, and the emblematic dragon bound among them — where is that bit of paper, Irene? Thanks. You see, Imelda, so; I have not devised any more, but all the front of the altar is to be carved too, and the words *Fides*, *Spes*, *Caritas*, introduced; it is a votive offering — I wish I knew its history.'

Vincenzo's artist spirit was all awake; his delicate, thin hand was playing with a carver's tool as he spoke, his face lighted up brightly. Irene looked equally happy; and, when they took their places at the tea-table, the conversation maintained the same course, and Imelda inquired how a rosary was progressing, which had been his amusement for a long time, whenever he was too ill to attempt work on a larger scale. Each bead, though no bigger than a nut, contained a perfect subject; one was a bunch of acanthus, another the Annunciation, a third the Salutation of St. Mary and St. Elizabeth. It was Imelda's delight to examine it whenever she came, and Vincenzo's pleasure was to puzzle her as to its destination, amusing himself with her unconsciousness that it was intended for herself. He half rose to fetch it when she inquired about it, but Irene forestalled him, and put it into Imelda's hands.

'Three beads since I was here last!' said she. 'Oh, Vincenzo, you have not been well!'

'You all use this rosary as a thermometer of my health,' said Vincenzo; 'but not another bead shall you see till my shrine and canopy are finished.'

'I am very glad to hear it,' said Mrs. Dalzell; 'I quite grudge the eyesight, and time, and talent you bestow on those beads. I tell him, Imelda, it would distract a saint to have that rosary in her hands, and that it is fit for nothing but to put in a museum.'

'Oh, it is indeed very beautiful,' said Imelda. 'Irene does not use one, or I should think it was for her when she is married.'

'No, it is for another friend of mine, but it is for a wedding present.'

'Oh! Is it any one that I know?'

'Yes; guess.'

Imelda guessed in vain. She was told that she would know some day, and renewed her examination of the beads. 'The last is a little bunch of roses — "mystic rose" — is that the reason? and this is vine leaves and grapes. How can you do such tiny carving? Signora, did you ever see anything like this before?'

'Not quite, but I suspect that Vincenzo took the idea from a Russian cross which I have — I dare say Irene will fetch it, if you have not seen it.'

The light-footed Irene had already gone in search of it. Like the rosary, it was made of box-wood, and on as minute a scale; its surface divided into compartments, and each compartment representing a scene from the New Testament. Mrs. Dalzell said that the Russian friend who had given it to her said these crosses were introduced by Ivan the Terrible, and ever since his time nearly every family in Russia had possessed such a one.

'Protestants don't think it wrong to have such things?' said Imelda, wonderingly; 'they believe what we do? It puzzles me very much. No, it cannot be the same; Irene does many good acts, but not as a penance, nor to gain indulgences. You know, every one who washes the pilgrims' feet to-night gains an indulgence.'

'I hardly understand what an indulgence means,' said Mrs. Dalzell; and Imelda found it difficult to explain.

'I am not sure,' she said, 'why, by a good deed, such as washing the pilgrims' feet, we get forgiveness of small sins — not

mortal ones, of course. Some people say that an indulgence is of no good unless you are in a state of grace; and who can be sure of being so? Indeed, I don't know what it is — but my confessor says that good works ought to be done.'

'I suppose so,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'Oh, then Protestants think so too; and I know how kind Irene was to that poor Catarina Bresca. Was it only because you had known her, Irene?'

'Well, was not that reason enough?'

'Oh, but I think there was another; please tell me.'

'Why, would you have had me let her starve, cruel child?'

'Ah, I was mistaken then; I thought perhaps you had a Protestant reason.'

Irene smiled and answered in lowered tones, 'If I had, it was that our Lord told His people to help all who are in want of help.'

'Ah! not to obtain anything for yourself — *capisco* — I see! But a great many people — Roman Catholics as you call them, do good without *egoismo*.'

'Yes,' replied Irene, 'but we ought not to talk in this way.'

'I forgot!' said Imelda, with a look of alarm; 'but we have not been arguing, have we?'

'Not much,' said Vincenzo, laughing; 'we have not been trying to convert you; but, lest we should, suppose we talk of something else.'

'Or get ready to go,' said Mrs. Dalzell, 'unless you will have another cup of coffee. Is a veil the proper head-dress, signorina? I see you have one.'

'Almost everybody wears one at the *lavanda* instead of a bonnet; I don't know why. May I get ready?'

'Imelda, do you mean to be a little white dove all your life, with no will of your own? Shall you ever learn to say, "Let us," instead of "May I?"'

She laughed at Vincenzo's saucy question, and said, 'Impertinent! Mamma says a woman's will should be the same as her father's, or — or —'

'Or as her husband's?'

Imelda looked up at him with smiling yet moistened eyes; an

allusion to Luigi was always so welcome, but it recalled the thought that he was absent and in peril. She ran away to Irene's room, and Vincenzo said to Mrs. Dalzell, 'Will she be a child all her life?'

'I could almost hope it, Vincenzo; I should regret to see her lose her simplicity as one does to find a pet child losing its childishness, and becoming too old to be petted.'

'I wonder if she ever will turn into a woman!'

'Yes, if ever she discovers that Ravelli does not love her. What shall you do this evening? Draw designs for your carving?'

'And read Gioberti. That man writes with a pen of fire! I shall have a visit from Cecchi, too, and perhaps Clementi.'

'I give him infinite credit for not joining the volunteers; it must have been such a sacrifice! but he told me yesterday that the bare idea of his going had made Contessa Clementi so much worse, that he has quite given it up. He certainly is a thoroughly good son, as I think most Italians are.'

'Yes; Ravelli, for instance, is devoted to his mother, and in any other case would have obeyed his father, I do believe; but I was certain that nothing would keep him from Ferrara. You know our proverb — "My home, my mother, those are the two best things that man can have." Good night; here they come, and I hear the carriage in the quadrangle. Irene, give me my journal before you go.'

She arranged for him the thick volume, and his pens and ink, and lingered to read the last entry. It was such a journal as many people in Rome kept at that time — a minute record of all daily events in which politics had any share.

'It will be material for history some day,' said Irene. 'Anything else before I go?'

As the ladies went out at the entrance of the palazzo, Count Clementi came in. His almost daily visits were very welcome to Vincenzo; he was one of the threads which connected the secluded invalid with the tumultuous world without, whose stir and swell Vincenzo heard as a man on the other side of inaccessible rocks hears the surge of an ocean, invisible to him, break in thunder on the shore. Clementi had become necessary to him

of late; Leone was away, Ravelli was away; Cecchi was a democrat, engaged in schemes of which the uninitiated knew nothing; Vincenzo was on excellent terms with him, but knew little of his views, and had no sympathy with them. Count Clementi was now the most intimate friend whom Vincenzo had in Rome; a visit from him was always cheering, and Irene, even if she had not liked him for his own sake, must have received him cordially, because she knew how much pleasure his visits gave to Vincenzo. As it was, she could meet him frankly and warmly, grateful for the entire suppression of feelings which she well knew still existed, and for the friendly manner in which he invariably brought her all tidings of the volunteers, and shared in Leone's letters to Vincenzo, when a hurried one chanced to arrive. She could leave home contentedly this evening, secure that Vincenzo would have a pleasant companion, and she exclaimed, involuntarily, 'Oh, I am so glad you have come! Vincenzo has been so well all to-day, and he has some good news to tell you. *A riverderla!*'

Clementi passed on, but Cecchi looked out from his domains, and called him in a whisper, and a political discussion of some minutes took place, in subdued but vehement tones. Count Clementi was no stranger to the plans of the ultra-faction; no speeches spurred them on in their own little club so fiercely as did his. He did not look like a conspirator, with his calm air and inscrutable face; yet there were darker secrets in his breast than those of which Cecchi had the keeping. Somehow or other, Cecchi never was ten minutes with Count Clementi, without being lashed by the remembrance of his wrongs — a word, an allusion so slight as to be almost imperceptible, would be sure to recall them. He was not a patriot, but a man bent on revenge; longing to trample on those who had injured him, and classing all rulers together as tyrants. His former experience of conspiracy had not cured him; on the contrary, its excitement and peril allured him, as the passion of the chase allures the chamois hunter, though he knows how many have fallen victims to it, and that he himself will become another. It was only when Cecchi thought of his wife, that he shrank back for an instant, and saw the whirlpool into which he was plunging. When Clementi left him, the most restless

agitation took possession of him; his features contracted, he walked up and down, listening to every sound. Once or twice, a sort of bitter laugh escaped him.

The sound of his wife's entrance forced him to compose himself; she came in full of excitement; she had been with friends to the *lavanda*, and had seen the Princess B—— wash a pilgrim's feet, and several *nuovi Cristiani* had obtained special leave to assist in the *lavanda* to show their devoutness; Lady Dall was there (viz. Mrs. Dalzell), and the two *signorine* — in short, Madama Cecchi was overflowing with the history of her evening, to which he listened nearly in silence, and, as soon as she would let him, plunged into a large book of accounts.

Irene had put aside all anxieties for this evening, and devoted herself to make the economy of the hospital clear to Mrs. Dalzell. They found a throng of carriages and ladies at the door of the side appropriated to females; the entrance to the men's side being equally crowded with gentlemen, for the *lavanda* is one of the few sights which attract the Romans. Following the feminine throng, Mrs. Dalzell and her companions passed up the staircase into a long, large hall, where so many ladies, old and young and of all ranks, were running in and out, that their number confused the eye and defied computation, like a multitude of ants on an ant-hill. They all wore dark dresses, with a picturesque scarlet skirt, defended by a little white apron, with a bib, as it would be termed in nursery language, and adorned by a badge with a picture of the Crucifixion, surrounded by the name of San Filippo Neri, the founder of the order.

Long tables occupied the sides of the room, divided from the space in the middle by rails, within which the younger sisters hastened backwards and forwards, bearing huge baskets of bread and trays of boiled fennel, apples, fish, and fritters. The elder ladies superintended, amid much laughter and chattering, greatly increased by the crowd of spectators pressed together in the centre of the room. There were a few foreigners, but the staple of the throng were black-veiled Romans, amongst whom a general acquaintance seemed to prevail, and who were greeting each other joyously. Presently, Imelda exclaimed, 'There is mamma!' and one of the black and scarlet ladies saw, and came to speak

to them, and to give the information that the *lavanda* would soon begin. Mrs. Dalzell had not at first recognised Signora Olivetti in her unfamiliar costume, becoming to all, with its spirited contrast of colors and neat little white sleeves and collar — and particularly so to Imelda's mother.

Signora Olivetti had not a moment's time to spare for visitors, but she admitted them within the rails, out of the crush, where they stood more at ease, though in some danger of being run over by the agile *sorelle*. Imelda smiled to her acquaintance; Irene gave Mrs. Dalzell information.

'It is a Roman edition of what we call a school feast,' said the English lady; 'and it reminds me of another thing. We have an institution for poor old men, called the Hospital of St. Cross — these brethren [looking round at the grey-haired old men who occasionally entered the room] in their peculiar dress remind me of the Brothers of St. Cross. I see only old men here, but I suppose there are young ones in the masculine department.'

'Oh yes, both Leone and Luigi belong to it, and many others that I know.'

'But the young men do not come here,' said Imelda, very simply, 'or all the girls would fall in love.'

'See, Mrs. Dalzell,' said Irene, drawing her aside to allow two girls, carrying a large tray, to pass; 'the supper is arranged in sets of four — four little pipkins for wine — four plates — four everything. It is a fast day, so they have no meat. All pilgrims are taken in for three nights, who come from a distance of more than sixty miles, with a recommendation from their parish priest, and they have a supper, but that is all; so they generally keep part for the next day, as you will see presently.'

'Oh, we can go on now,' said Imelda, as a general movement towards the end of the room and a lessening of the crowd showed that an outlet had been made. They followed in the stream, past one room, where sat the female pilgrims, clustered as thick as bees, waiting till they were summoned, to another large room on a lower floor, along whose walls ran stone benches, below which stood a goodly array of tubs.

Here there was no barrier; visitors and '*sorelle*' mingled

together, and a general Babel of sounds arose, in the midst of which the train of pilgrims began to enter, each led by a lady to a place on the benches. They were of all ages and very unequal ranks, from all parts of Italy, and even from Germany, speaking dialects, various and unintelligible, to the great amusement of the younger *sorelle*, who laughed more than was quite proper for sisters of charity. Old and young and middle-aged were these pilgrims; one wore a heavy black coif, which marked her as a widow; another was a beautiful girl, scarcely sixteen; a third withered and bent, with a child in her arms fast asleep. Side by side they sat, looking patient and weary, and a little embarrassed by their novel position. The laughing and talking went on all around them, nobody paying them much attention, till a priest entered, carrying a book; an attendant followed, with a candle, a bell, and a desk, on which the book — a Latin Bible — was placed; the priest opened it, the bell was loudly rung, and the chattering ceased for a moment, while each lady knelt down and prepared to wash the feet of a pilgrim, both reciting a Pater Noster, and the priest read aloud in Latin the chapter which tells how our Lord washed His disciples' feet. Silence for an instant — then whispered requests for towels, water, this and that, rose in gusts, soon louder, more general; the hum had recommenced, the voice of the reader was drowned; he signed for silence in vain, then rang his little bell vehemently, and turning to the crowd, exclaimed in despair, 'Sisters, sisters, hush! it is scandalous, scandalous, most scandalous!'

With one accord all the throng cried hush, and there was a brief pause, during which the unintelligible Latin lecture again proceeded, only to be overpowered anew by the mirthful throng, who, like birds let loose, darted up-stairs again as soon as the *lavanda* was over, to aid in the second part of the entertainment, namely, supper.

'I see that only a small part of the sisterhood shared in the actual *lavanda*,' said Mrs. Dalzell, as they went up-stairs.

'It is permitted, not obligatory,' said Irene; 'they do it or not, as they choose. People consider it as a humiliation; I heard an English lady down-stairs saying it must be a severe penance; but really I think the *sorelle* only consider it very diverting.'

'I should have allowed a little soap,' said Mrs. Dalzell. 'It strikes me that the pilgrims rather submit to the washing than like it.'

'Yes,' said Irene; 'did you hear that lady — English from her accent — who asked one woman if she did not feel grateful for the kindness shown to her by the young lady? She answered with such a droll look!'

'I heard her,' said Imelda; 'I thought of what you were saying before we came. She answered, "Not in the least, dear signora; the young lady gains an indulgence by it — I am of advantage to her, more than she to me, since spiritual things are more valuable than earthly ones."'

'A reply that my countrywoman hardly expected,' said Mrs. Dalzell. 'I often think the lower classes of Italians and Irish alike in their ready answers.'

The supper was laid out in three long rooms, and soon the pilgrims were marshalled in, and took their places; grace was said in Latin, and they all responded in the same language, standing reverently. The meal began; it was a very ample one; there was plenty left for the next day, and each woman spread her pocket-handkerchief to receive the fragments. Probably Mrs. Dalzell was right in thinking the supper to be more to their taste than the washing, though both were equally needed after their long journeys on foot. The *sorelle* waited on them briskly, and the visitors stood by, and looked on. Towards the end of the meal, the pilgrims produced their bottles, to be filled with part of their portion of red wine — bottles made of skin, of iron, or of wood, curious and often beautiful in shape and material, each peculiar to the district from whence its owner came. A collector of curiosities would have emptied his purse on the spot to acquire them; as it was, no one was present except Mrs. Dalzell who took any particular notice of them. One took her fancy so much that she asked its possessor whether she would sell it. The old woman looked up in wonder and doubt; Mrs. Dalzell thought her Italian was in fault, and looked round for Irene, but both she and Imelda had been absorbed into a group at a little distance.

'Irene!' She did not hear. Mrs. Dalzell repeated the

call. 'Irene! Mademoiselle Mori! will you come here for one moment?'

She now heard and came; the reason of the summons was explained to her, but when she interpreted it to the old woman, she found a pair of kindly shrewd eyes fixed on her face, and was answered with 'Are you Mademoiselle Mori, signorina?' in an unfamiliar, but still quite intelligible, dialect, and the younger *sorelle* pressed round, exclaiming, 'She has heard — she has heard of Irene — of Mademoiselle Mori. Where did you hear of her, good woman? Where do you come from?'

'I come from Reni, a village beyond Ferrara, *signorine mie*, and I bring her a message; but I do not know that I am to give it to all the world.'

'Oh yes, yes, yes, may she not, *cara* Irene? it cannot be a secret; may we hear, Mademoiselle Mori?' cried a dozen voices. 'She comes from near Ferrara, and she has a message for Mademoiselle Mori — only listen!'

'Oh, you may hear,' said Irene with amusement and surprise. 'But Ferrara!'

'Oh, Ferrara! Ferrara! she must have seen our troops! Did you see our soldiers — the Roman soldiers?' cried every voice, and the crowd thickened momentarily, and all the pilgrims within earshot suspended their supper, and leant eagerly forward to catch what was going on. The old woman had a pleasant, good face; she seemed greatly entertained by the general interest, and commenced readily with a touch of poetry.

'I have come from a country laid desolate, ladies; our vineyards are cut down, our cottages are burnt, our fields are trampled like a road; I sent my two sons to the war, and I vowed a pilgrimage if the cause prospered; and when good news came from Piedmont, I went to our priest, and got a letter from him, and set out with my youngest grandchild, who is asleep on my lap now. He is my own child, ladies; for his mother died at his birth, and I had him from that day, and his father is in the war. Holy Virgin, protect him! I have come a shorter way than many here to-night. When I set out, I often thought of Rome and how I should tell my friends when I got back what I had seen there (none of our people have ever seen Rome, and all

wish to hear what Pio Nino is like); but I am old, and the child fell sick, and I had to carry him every step, and many times I thought I should lie down and die on the way. One afternoon I was toiling on; I had not a half *baiocco* to buy a supper or a night's lodging; the child did nothing but moan — he had grown like a waxen image, and hardly seemed to know me. Saints forgive me! what bad thoughts I had! Just as I was going to give it up and turn back, I came to a hill-side where soldiers were resting under the trees. First I saw one alone, with his horse bending its head down to him as he lay on the grass —'

'A black horse?' asked Imelda, eagerly, and when she heard that it was black, she felt certain that this was Ravelli's noble Auster, and clasped her hands with joy; but 'Go on, go on,' was exclaimed on all sides, and the old woman continued:

'There were but a few troops here; doubtless the rest had gone on further; soon I saw some half-dozen men lying asleep; next thirty or more sitting and listening to one who told them some story. I came among the trees to listen too, and I do assure you, *signore*, I forgot all my trouble while I hearkened to him. It was the history of a brave cavalier who loved his country, and is now in Paradise. I never recollected where I was till he stopped, and all the men began shouting and clapping their hands like demons.'

'Oh, Nota! Nota! Nota!' ran from lip to lip. 'Was he handsome? What was he called? Did you speak to him?'

'I shall tell you presently, *signorine*,' said the old dame, nodding her head; 'he got up and walked away smiling, and passed close by me — then, seeing me standing, he stopped, and asked whence I came, and such like questions; then, when he had heard my story, he turns to the rest, and says he, "Friends, here is a good woman who has sent her sons to the war, and is going to our Rome to pray for them — what shall we give her to make her remember us there too?" — and the silver showered into his helmet! I was made rich in a moment, ladies, and that was not all — he would not leave me there with the sick child; he took it into his arms and carried it a mile or so to an inn, while the other soldiers were halting; and, as he was about to go, I asked

him what I could do to reward him — I knew it was but words, for what could such as I do for him? but I could not help saying it. First he laughed, but soon I saw a pleasant thought come into his face, and he gathered a bough from the nearest tree, and said, "Here, dame, you shall take this to Rome, and go to Palazzo Clementi, asking for Mademoiselle Mori — remember — and tell her that this has come too late for Palm Sunday, but she must wear it on Easter day!" I asked him who, I should say, sent it; but he only smiled, and said she would know. I should have brought it last evening, but I and the child got along like a procession, stopping here, stopping there, though he grew better from that blessed day, and it was too late, so I thought to find Palazzo Clementi early to-morrow. However, if this be Mademoiselle Mori, I can give it to her now.' And regarding kindly Irene's flushed, smiling face and glistening eyes, she took, from within her peasant bodice, a branch of olive, dry and withered; but what were all the fresh olive woods on all the hill-sides in Italy to Irene, compared with this little bough? She took it with fingers that trembled, but held it very fast.

'Come to Palazzo Clementi all the same,' she whispered; 'I too have something for you.'

'She has seen our troops — she has spoken to Signor Nota — she heard him improvise,' circulated like a breeze through the rooms, and brought an increasing crowd round the old woman, regardless of orders to be quiet, and not to block up the way. The Renese was the heroine of the evening, and questions poured thick upon her; every one was anxious to prove that she had seen their own particular friends among the troops; and much was Irene envied for possessing an actual message from one of the volunteers. Imelda had clasped her hands with unselfish joy and whispered, 'I am so glad!' and longed, but dared not to inquire, more about the master of the black charger, which she had entirely made up her mind could be only Luigi's gallant and gentle Auster. The general excitement only lessened when the time came for the pilgrims to go to their beds, a ceremony as public as the *lavanda*, but Mrs. Dalzell did not stay to see it. She was weary with the long evening, during which she had had no opportunity of sitting down, and Irene was eager to be at home and tell Vincenzo all that had happened.

CHAPTER XXIV.

When shall we three meet again?
Oft shall glowing Hope expire,
Oft shall wearied Love retire,
Oft shall Death and Sorrow reign,
Ere we three shall meet again.

'YES, my dear Irene,' said Mrs. Dalzell, 'I really must ask Signor Cecchi to take a place for me in the diligence next Wednesday. Sir Arthur Laurie is going then, and has offered to see me safely on board ship at Cività Vecchia, and that is too good an offer to be rejected. I must not linger here any longer. Do you know it is more than eighteen months since I was in England? But now, tell me something about your plans; I believe that many people say, a celebrity like Mademoiselle Mori ought to have a grander dwelling than your apartments here.'

'Oh, I know they do, but we cannot leave our dear old rooms.'

'Even Madama Cecchi, in her profound admiration for you, declared the other day that though, if you left her, her heart would be found broken into little pieces, yet she was not worthy to have you here. She will insist on your going, some day! What a levee you had last night! — two of the guardia, an abate, the maestro di capella, an American, three Englishmen (I suppose I must not count Vincenzo's friends, the German artists), all raving about the voice and the beautiful eyes of Mademoiselle Mori! By the bye, I should like to see the abate's sonnet again.'

'I dare say he got the letter writer in Piazza Montanari to compose it for him,' laughed Irene. 'Vincenzo wanted an *allumette*, so I made one of the sonnet. Really sonnets are very useful things — they quite keep us in *allumettes*.'

'Irene, your engagement to Leone has been a great safeguard to you.'

'Yes, signora,' she answered from her heart. 'Oh, no one can tell what a shield his love has been to me. I have thought so often of that, and what my fate might have been, had I become a singer without the home you gave me. Poor Catarina Bresca taught me to realize what cause I have for gratitude. Do you know, once, years ago, before I appeared in public, a bunch of flowers and a note were sent me through Nanna. I fancied then, that they came from Count Clementi, but I never knew; for Leone made me return them, without reading the note or asking Nanna whence they came. I did not know then how important that first step was.'

'My dear child, it was well indeed that you acted rightly. I cannot tell you how shocked I was to learn the kind of Don Juan character that Count Clementi bears.'

'Oh, signora, it is like that of half the young men here! I sometimes wonder if any good can be in store for us Romans, when there is such a corrupt state of society. You don't know half — one learns it in such a profession as mine; things come before me that make me feel absolutely contaminated.'

'Nay, dear child; — you have read *Comus?* Well, it seems to me, that you are not unlike the lady, fearless and pure among all the rabble rout, and unharmed by the magician's spells.'

Irene kissed the hand which she held, and Mrs. Dalzell looked fondly at her noble, truthful countenance, and rejoiced to think that not a shadow of blame had ever fallen on the fair name of the young cantatrice, who had now all Rome at her feet; but the boldest of her adorers ventured on none but the most respectful homage. Irene's return had been a triumph. Not only had her cause become identified with that of the liberals, then at its height of prosperity, but the public missed her sorely, and were indignant at the risk which they had run of losing her. The uproar on the night of the *Caio* had been the work of a clique; the tide had turned in Irene's favor, and, had Madame St. Simon reappeared, she would have been received with a storm of hisses. But she was at Paris, strong in long-established popularity, and missing no opportunity of contemptuously crying down the young rival, whose fame reached her even there.

Irene received an ovation on her first night in the Teatro Regio; she was recalled half-a-dozen times amid tumultuous applause, and half buried in garlands, nosegays, and bracelets; ever since, her door had been besieged by foreigners and natives, eager to be introduced to the star of the day. She enjoyed the success for which she had worked patiently; it was not a sudden glare, but well and gradually earned fame; she enjoyed her triumph, too, and her levees, laughed at her adorers, and charmed all who approached her; for, as Madame Marriotti once said, she had that gift of fascination which is distinct from beauty, but full as powerful. There was a great course open to her, if she chose to enter on it, but —

'No,' she said, in answer to something mentioned by Mrs. Dalzell, regarding the engagement at Vienna which Madame Marriotti wished to obtain for her; 'no, I could not accept it; if I once began that life, I could not draw back; my place is here. I do not see, however, why I should not go to Naples, or Milan, or Venice, in the intervals of the season here; some day that will be for Leone to settle. I should certainly have accepted that offer from the San Carlo Theatre at Naples this Lent, and then returned here; but I could not leave Rome, and I don't think those six weeks were wasted; I wanted some more lessons, and Herr Z. has certainly improved me. Madame Marriotti likes no style but one, and I wanted to understand others. She is too exclusive, too severe in her taste; no modern music satisfies her, not even Mendelssohn's, which I now feel to be magnificent.'

'Unquestionably those weeks were well spent; Madame Marriotti herself said so, and you act and sing all the better for having had a rest,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'I must go,' said Irene, as she looked at her watch; 'I shall never be dressed in time, if I linger any longer. It is the *Cenerentola* to-night. You must come and hear me before you go, signora. Ah, *carissima amica*, when shall I see you again in Rome?'

'I have promised to come back for your marriage, you know, dear child, if it does not take place till the autumn.'

'I shall miss you so much in every way. I wanted to ask

you whether Vincenzo is chaperon enough at our *società?* Madama Cecchi is often there, and yet —'

'I think if I were you I would make Madalena come in, if Madama Cecchi cannot. Madalena looks staid and respectable enough for a dozen chaperons.'

'I have a great advantage in being a native of Rome,' said Irene; 'for I made some friends before I became a cantatrice, who give me quiet, refreshing society still. Had I come here as a stranger, I should only have known men. As it is, there is Casa Olivetti always open to me, and I am not asked *there* merely to sing.'

She went away warbling a cadence with a gay and saucy expression, which signified that she was quite aware that certain great ladies cultivated her acquaintance, because it was advantageous to have such an attraction at their parties, and economical to be able to invite her without payment.

Many English were leaving Rome, alarmed by the unquiet state of Italy and the revolution of Vienna, which had caused a tumult of joy in Rome. It was hailed by illuminations and processions, every bell in the whole city pealing; the streets were thronged by crowds who shouted and danced for joy, let off their guns, strewed flowers, and displayed flags from balcony, roof, and tower, till the popular excitement breaking all bounds, the crowd rushed up to the Venetian palace, the residence of the Austrian ambassador, tore down and trampled on the detested arms of Austria, and then in a vast throng of half-frantic men, women, and children, rushed up the broad steps of Ara Cœli, above the Capitol, and burst forth into a *Te Deum* of gratitude for the downfall of *i barbari*. None present can have forgotten the sermon then preached by Padre Gavazzi, whose deep voice resounded through the church, uttering vehement, heart-stirring denunciations, which found a ready echo in the breasts of the people. Then, as night came on, out poured all Rome into the streets again, and the same mad revel and fire-fly dance, of *moccoletti* began, which is the crowning delight of the carnival, but had not been indulged in, before, this year; for on the right day all Rome was in agitation, and mourning over the blood shedding at Milan, afterwards so well avenged.

This was on the 21st of March. Some of the visitors at Rome were so much alarmed, that they left it at once: but more remained till after Easter, when, as usual, they went off like the *girandole*, 'north, south, east, and west,' as Madama Cecchi expressed it. Naples was in no inviting state, Upper Italy still less so, France in confusion; so that nothing remained for the English but to hasten by the shortest way to their own country, which was itself feeling the influence of the general convulsion and somewhat affrighted by Chartist-risings.

Mrs. Dalzell was an experienced traveller, and preferring the risk of going alone to that of finding every bed at hotels and every berth in steamers occupied, she delayed her journey until the first rush of departing tourists was over; though she thus lost the chance of going with several friends. It turned out, however, that an Englishman with whom she had become slightly acquainted was also lingering after the rest, and she gladly accepted him as her escort. This was Sir Arthur Laurie, first a patron, and afterwards a friend of Vincenzo's — a man of about thirty-four, wealthy and unmarried, a perfect specimen of a high-bred English gentleman. Like every one else, he had gone to hear Irene, and his admiration for her (not so much as the cantatrice, but as the charming girl whom he saw in his visits to Vincenzo), though quiet and undemonstrative, was so evident, that Mrs. Dalzell early perceived it, and had thought it right to mention before him that there was such a person as Leone Nota. It was difficult to say what effect the information of her engagement had on him; he still came frequently to see Vincenzo, and not seldom appeared at Irene's levees, where he sat silent, observing her arch and animated manner or listening when she sang; but he spoke no Italian, and his conversation was almost always addressed to Vincenzo, who learned from him much that interested him greatly of the habits of thought and of politics in England, always so perplexing to foreigners. Of politics he had never been able to glean much from Mrs. Dalzell, who, like most other English women, knew and cared little about them. The society of a member of the House of Commons, with a large estate, accustomed both to country and public life, was valuable to Vincenzo, in whom there was a great deal of the Englishman

in spite of his foreign birth and breeding; he readily sympathized with anything English, unlike Irene, who was heart and soul Italian, and thoroughly believed that

> 'While stands the Colosseum Rome shall stand,
> And when Rome falls — the world!'

Sir Arthur sometimes listened to her enthusiasm with a smile, but always with interest, and he once said apart to Vincenzo, 'Your sister might be a Corinne. I wish her a happier fate; but I can hardly imagine her ending in calm commonplace.'

'I hope she will have happiness which is too rare to be commonplace,' said Vincenzo. 'I often think how little my father could have foreseen her course — his little Nightingale, as he used to call her.'

'She has found her vocation,' said Sir Arthur, pausing, and looking at the eloquent, liquid eyes of Irene, which kindled and glowed as those around her spoke of Milan and Venice. 'It is strange how prejudiced we English are against anything like public life for a woman.'

Mrs. Dalzell heard and thought that this was the strongest proof she had yet seen of how far Irene had captivated the reserved and fastidious Englishman.

'It was fated that she should be a cantatrice, I suppose,' said Vincenzo; 'everything has tended that way; but her public career will, perhaps, end with Nota's return.'

Sir Arthur made no reply, possibly because Irene and a young German artist began to sing. Vincenzo's, as well as Irene's, friends came to these evening meetings; for he had acquired a few acquaintances of his own craft, and enjoyed heartily the artist talk which they brought with them.

Madama Cecchi's sharp eyes had long ago found Sir Arthur out, and she privately asked Mrs. Dalzell whether in England men of rank could marry beneath themselves.

'We do not hold to rank as the Romans do,' said Mrs. Dalzell.

'That cavaliere — *quel gentleman Inglese* — he is of rank, and doubtless opulent!'

'He is of a good family, and has a fine old house in Northumberland.'

'In Nortomberlano!' said Madama Cecchi, strenuously attacking the long name so unlike her soft Italian ones. 'Where is that? near London? Ah, it matters not. And could he marry our signorina? would his family allow it? would the Queen consent?'

'Nobody could object, if he chose to do so.'

'*Cosa stupenda!* see what a thing it is to be free! But rank is rank, and Heaven made it; the plebeian is not a Cæsar,' said the padrona, whose democratic predilections by no means did away with her respect for long descent. 'Still Cupido is a liberal, a *Carbonaro*, is it not true? He does not ask if Psyche was born of a beggar or a duchess. And *quell' angiola* might be a *miladi*, and she gives it all up for the sake of Leone! What constancy! may she only be rewarded! I said to her yesterday, "There is that piece of northern ice — (speaking with respect, signora) — that piece of northern ice dissolving beneath your eyes, and you will not see or hear; yet it is serious, oh very serious, when these Englishmen fall in love! They do not sigh nor weep like us Italians, but they shut up their sentiments in their hearts; and if they are unfortunate in their love, they shoot themselves." And she only laughed! But is it not true, signora; will not that be the end of this poor gentleman?'

Mrs. Dalzell knew not whence the padrona derived her belief of the desperate nature of English love, but assured her she did not think Sir Arthur's life in danger.

'Ah, I feel for him, signora! it tears my heart to think of this gentleman; the northern nations are slow to feel, they do not love fiercely and swiftly; they do not die abruptly as we do; but they are as iron — it grows red hot and is bent, and ever after keeps its shape. I have had many lodgers, and I have always observed that to be the English character. But we could not spare our signorina; she is all Italian, *è tale quale come la Giulietta.* What a play — what a play! Signor Leone translated it to me from the prose of Guglielmo Shaksperay, an English author, who derived it from our so touching opera of *I Montecchi e Capeletti.* I wept, my heart beat fast, Nino wept — we

sprang up, and assured *il Romeo* that she was not dead, but alas! in vain. Oh, that tragedy is truly Italian, *Italianissimo!* Thus we love. But to return to that gentleman; you doubtless know his friends! all the English know each other; persuade them to get him a wife speedily, signora.'

The case did not appear so desperate to Mrs. Dalzell as to the padrona; but she did think that Irene might have been Lady Laurie, had she willed it.

Packing-up and leave-takings are rarely cheerful things, especially when those who part are to be separated by long distances; but Mrs. Dalzell was returning to her own country and dear friends, while Irene was being left behind in anxiety and suspense, the future of Rome uncertain, and Leone in the wars. As usual, the one left was far more to be pitied than the one who went. Mrs. Dalzell faithfully promised to return in the autumn or spring for Irene's marriage, and though she said it with the proviso 'If nothing should happen to prevent me,' it was merely the usual commonplace acknowledgment of the uncertainty of human affairs; she did not really suppose that any event was at all likely to interfere with her plans.

The diligence started in the evening. Madama Cecchi provided coffee for Mrs. Dalzell before she went, and bade her a tearful adieu. Vincenzo, too, parted with her in the palace, even the short walk to the diligence-office was an effort beyond his power; and she saw them both waving her a farewell from the window as she went to the office, escorted by Irene, Cecchi, Menica, and Count Clementi, who courteously issued forth from his domicile, as they went down-stairs, on purpose to accompany her. Cecchi carried a small basket full of cakes, which he offered to her when she had taken her seat, saying that his wife had made them, and begged she would eat them, '*per l'amor suo.*' Menica had the care of a flask of orvieto, also a gift for the benefit of Mrs. Dalzell, who gratified and astonished the damsel by promising to take the pretty bottle all the way to England. It was a fine evening, very welcome after the constant rain of that wet winter and spring. There was a little crowd as usual in the piazza, just as there always is in England round a stage coach, consisting partly of idlers waiting to see the travellers start, and

partly of officials, and of the travellers themselves. In the first of the two vehicles about to start, an English family had just established themselves, with the exception of the father, who had been transacting some business within the office, and now came out, anxious to see that wife, daughters, maid, and trunks, were all safely stowed away; but while he was gazing earnestly up at the laden roof of the diligence, a hand seized on his, and a bearded face saluted him with a kiss on each cheek. It was the farewell of the Italian with whom he had been lodging, and was evidently altogether unexpected by the Englishman, who, probably during the whole of his residence in Rome, had not realized the existence of his landlord, except when he came to receive his rent; and the ex-tenant's countenance expressed such blank astonishment, not unmingled with disgust, that the heads of all his family were suddenly withdrawn from the windows of the diligence, and suppressed sounds of laughter issued from within. The leave-taking between Mrs. Dalzell and her party was interrupted by the appearance of an American in angry distress, utterly ignorant of Italian, and outrageous at the stupidity of the officials who could neither comprehend his native language nor his attempts at French, though he continually raised his voice, shouting as if they were deaf, apparently under the belief that they must understand if he only spoke loud enough.

'Could you ask what he wants, and I will translate,' said Irene to Sir Arthur Laurie, who had just come. He politely addressed the irate gentleman, whose wants Irene made known to the officials, while they murmured, 'Such as he should not go about! People should learn to speak before they travel!'

No one who had heard the flow of wrathful language which the American had been indulging in could help laughing. He was to be a fellow-traveller of Mrs. Dalzell's, and took his seat, leant back for a moment, then putting his head out of window, gave an admiring look at the curtain of purple cloud which seemed to hang from the sky and close in the long narrow street, and exclaimed, 'Well, I call that handsome!'

'Think of us sometimes in England, signora!' said Count Clementi; 'see, day departs with you!'

'*Buon viaggio*, dear signora! Madonna look favorably on you!' cried Menica.

The conductor mounted to his seat, the postilion sprang on his horse; Irene had only time to give her friend one last close embrace, before the whip cracked, the bells jingled, and the two diligences rattled over the stony streets. Mrs. Dalzell leant from her window and gazed back; she caught another glimpse of the group she sought, still standing in the piazza, looking after her — the houses all aflame with sunset lights, and great purple clouds floating in a golden sky, where one large star already shone. Sir Arthur did not look; she fancied she heard him sigh, and he remained silent long after they had crossed the Tiber, passed Santo Spirito, and made the customary halt outside Porta Cavaleggieri, while every one's passport was examined — a delay which caused much grumbling from the other occupants of the diligence. Darkness came on rapidly, even before they resumed their way; there was only a kind of half light prevailing, which dimly showed that now they traversed open country, and now ascended hills; tall asphodels crowned the banks on either side, making a very ghostly-looking *chevaux-de-frise*, behind which brigands might easily have lurked.

But the diligences rattled on unmolested, keeping close together for protection, and no sounds were heard, except some which one traveller declared to be the song of nightingales, and another less poetically to be the croaking of frogs. It was a wearisome night, as most nights spent in travelling must be; but Mrs. Dalzell at length fell asleep and did not awaken till daybreak, when the Campagna was sparkling with dew, and glittering with golden cytisus, above which rose myrtle-bushes and the stately white asphodel. The sun was just rising in a saffron sky above the Mediterranean close by, and Cività Vecchia rose in the distance, melting into a background of pink and golden cloud. Not a wave broke the blue expanse of sea, but a white speck floated slowly along which might have been a nautilus.

A few hours had yet to be spent on Italian ground; the steamer did not start till noon, but soon Mrs. Dalzell was on board; and a few more days saw her back in England, wonder-

ing to find how ignorant her countrymen were of Italian affairs, and how remarkably indifferent to them — back in calm, sober England, where every one was occupied by his own affairs, and too much accustomed to liberty to be in the least enthusiastic about it.

CHAPTER XXV.

O holy knowledge, holy liberty,
O holy rights of nations! If I speak
These bitter things against the jugglery
Of days that in your names proved blind and weak,
It is that tears are bitter.

E. B. Browning.

Pio Nono had doubtless begun his reign as a sincere reformer, probably with the fair vision of Italy freed from the Austrians, and himself at the head of a league of all the Italian states. But the long accounts of misgovernment left him by his predecessors were not to be so easily liquidated. He had granted much in the short period of his Popedom, and it no doubt seemed far more to him than it really was. 'Well, Count,' said he to the French Ambassador, Rossi, 'are you satisfied, now that you have got your lay element in the Government?' But the working of this lay element was hampered at every turn; the clergy, who had hitherto possessed exclusive power, looked with an evil eye on the secular intruders. The new form of government was very unlike that of free states; every law proposed by the two chambers (the Alto Consiglio consisting of members named by the Pope, and the Chamber of Deputies chosen by the people) was submitted to the Consistory of Cardinals, who deliberated in secret upon it, and had the right of a veto. The Parliament discussed all its measures openly; the Consistory, like the Criminal Court, sat with closed doors. Moreover, Parliament was forbidden to enter on 'mixed affairs,' under which innumerable matters — even certain taxes — were included. These were reserved for an ecclesiastical court. To have a Representative Parliament at all was, however, much; the usual rejoicings had followed when its concession had been announced, and a deputation, of

whom Leone Nota had formed one, had been sent to offer thanks to the Pope; who had made them one of his beautiful, striking speeches, which was greatly admired; but there was much quiet laughter in Rome at his assertion therein, that 'all the Sacred College had gladly and unanimously consented to the reforms.' His subjects knew better!

The war had worked both ill and well for the reforms. It had given a vent to the excitement ready to break into revolution, but it had taken away many moderate liberals, whose influence now no longer checked the ultras who remained behind to thunder in the Circolo Popolare. Nota, all-powerful with his own party, and restraining and captivating by his eloquence even those whose views were the most narrow or most extravagant — Nota was absent, and so were many of the truest patriots. Vincenzo was doing his best to supply Leone's place; he had undertaken to overlook the printing of a work on *The Present and Future of Italy*, which the mitigated censorship now allowed to be published; and he also conducted his friend's newspaper, and though Vincenzo's articles had not the energetic fervor of Leone's, they were strong and sensible, and went some way towards counteracting the radical papers. His room became the resort of all who were interested in the paper and the views it supported; and round Vincenzo's couch gathered men whose aspirations were so lofty and pure, that for their sake, Rome might almost have been spared. Fate had dealt strangely with the invalid boy, who was now fast becoming a man, and as influential in the battle of life as those who could go forth at pleasure to confront it. What *zingara* would have ventured to prophesy the future of Irene and Vincenzo at the time when Mrs. Dalzell found them in the dreary old palazzo?

Vincenzo's spirit kept him up, when bodily weakness and continual *tracasseries* combined to overpower him. The editor of a political newspaper has a life nearly as full of cabals and vexations as a popular cantatrice. Irene knew what the latter life was, and Vincenzo experienced the former, and, perhaps, his was the more trying. When was moderation popular? The favorite newspaper at Rome was the *Contemporaneo*, whose editor, Sturbini, had the reputation of keeping himself out of danger, while

he urged others into it; but he was mighty in the *Circoli*, ever fond of a vehement orator. Later came *Dom Pirleone*, a satirical paper, with woodcuts, published daily, to the huge delight of great part of the witty and laughter-loving Romans.

Political agitation and riots increased perceptibly; the provinces as yet kept quiet, and believed in Pio Nono, who was now, however, beginning to tremble and waver, terrified by insinuations that he was encouraging revolutions, and by the retirement of the Jesuits, who fled from the general outcry raised against them, taking, however, high ground, and declaring they went because they would not be made a pretext for sedition. Few things had so intoxicated the Romans as this triumph over the detested *Gesuiti*, concerning whom they whispered tales surpassing anything related in *Le Juif Errant*.

Every ear was now intent for tidings of the war, and all hearts bounded or sank as the uncertain rumors of good and ill arrived, and kept the whole city in agitation. Durando had put himself into communication with Charles Albert, and had been ordered by him to pass the Po, which was by no means confining the Papal troops to a war of defence, as the Pope had intended; but the Pope, in agonies of indecision, would neither consent nor forbid, while the volunteers were burning to join the Piedmostese army, and outrageous at the cautious delays of Durando, who knew better than they did what stubborn enemies they would encounter in the Austrians. Radetsky's army had long been trained to war and hardships, while the Roman soldiers had had no previous experience, and were peculiarly liable to sudden fatal illnesses. The Roman has none of the tenacity of life which northern nations possess; and their gallant spirit alone would not enable them to cope rashly with such formidable enemies. Modena became the seat of war; the Friuli was ravaged by fire and sword. Then came the triumphant news of the victory at Pastrengo, and that Naples had sent 14,000 soldiers to the war. For a time even King Ferdinand was popular.

But amid the general rejoicing (for even among the *Neri* there were some who loved Italy), Pio Nono was sad, knowing that the Austrians abhorred him, and racked by his own undecided

mind. His nuncios in Germany sent him awful reports of the hatred there felt for him; a vision of new schisms haunted him, and finally he was thunderstruck by the famous proclamation of Durando turning the war into a kind of crusade.

Indisputably it put Pio Nono into a false position, and was an enormous blunder. The war was holy — a war of independence ever is such — and the Austrian barbarity was notorious, and will be a stain on their name for ever; but religion had nothing on earth to do with the matter. It was assuredly not befitting the priest who called himself Father of all Christendom, to encourage one half of his children to destroy the other half. And so felt Pio Nono. Just at this time stories, partly true, partly false, were rife of the violences and brutality of the Austrians, framed so as to exasperate the Romans to the utmost — tales as dreadful as those unspeakably terrible ones which maddened England during the Indian rebellion. And these tidings reached Rome just when a speech made by Pio Nono to the Consistory became public; combined together, this caused such a ferment as made all previous agitation seem tranquillity.

It was first announced to Vincenzo and Irene by Madama Cecchi, who entered their sitting-room pouring out broken and incoherent exclamations. 'The butchers — the heathens — and he, that false, deceptive coward, that Bengal tiger — only worthy of those barbarians; he dares to say our soldiers shall not fight; he declares he never blessed our banners! He is worse than Gregory — at least *he* hated the Austrians! Worse? Ay, a million times worse; Gregory never pretended to be a liberal. Ah! the traitor — the double, treble, fourfold traitor!'

'But who? what?' demanded Vincenzo, looking up from his writing, Irene at the same time turning round from the piano in amazement at the abrupt entrance and violent demeanor of the padrona, who replied in almost a shriek, while her eyes flashed through wrathful tears.

'The Pope! this traitor, who says our soldiers shall not fight! says it in so many words in his allocution to the Consistory! All the world knows it by this time. He might well say it in Latin; our Italian would have refused to come to his tongue to utter such treason. What will the world say? What will my husband

say? Ah, the fox in a Papal mantle, the wolf in sheep's clothing — from lying princes *libera nos, Domine*. And at such a moment — at such a moment, when we hear how those murderous villains have conducted themselves in the Friuli — '

'Stay, I do not comprehend a word; tell us what has really happened; Donizetti and Martino were here last night, and knew nothing of all this,' said Vincenzo, while Irene listened breathless, but Madama Cecchi hurried on unheeding —

'Those infamous ones — those Austrians — say "Austrian," and you have said all — my tongue will not tell what they have done; was not Milan enough? All the saints reward them as they merit! I will tell you but one tale; a peasant woman took in one of *i nostri* [our soldiers] who was sick, and fed and sheltered him; she sees a body of those demons approaching, and warns him, cup of gold that she was! He fled into a wood of chestnuts, and thence escaped; but they come — demand him, for they had heard that one of our men was there; they threaten to bayonet her infant, unless she confesses where he is — still she refuses, she does not believe such infamy possible; it is snatched from her arms and cut to pieces before her eyes — all are deaf to her prayers, her shrieks; and she — I dare not think of her fate — oh Heaven, Heaven! *Basta!* when her husband returns at night he finds wife and child massacred, and a heap of white ashes where his cottage had stood. It is true!'

'Impossible, impossible; the Austrians are men. It is some lie.'

'Men? impossible, forsooth? They are not men nor Christians; they are demons; do you think that is half what I have heard? Do you remember Lucio Naldi, that young painter, that lamb, that innocent boy? He was sketching in the Friuli this year, you recollect? He met with our soldiers, he put on the uniform, like a good patriot. Well, he is dead, and how did he die? Ask the Croats who seized him, and hung him by the neck to a chestnut tree, with a writing on his breast, "Thus fare the soldiers of Pio Nono." Is that enough?'

'Good heavens!' said Vincenzo, confounded by this report, 'Lucio Naldi, that gentle, light-hearted fellow — I cannot believe it.'

'I speak of the Croats,' said Madama Cecchi, with emphasis. 'Ah, Holy Virgin, I seem to hear that poor boy's gay laugh now; I see his blue eyes and long fair hair — alas! who has told his mother?' and she threw herself into a chair, and burst into a flood of tears. Irene, too, was weeping silently and bitterly; the dreadful fate of one whom she had known might well affect her; and, besides, which of the volunteers was safe from like barbarity? Vincenzo at last spoke again, trying to assume a confidence that his pale lips belied. 'We have repeatedly found those miserable reports to be exaggerated — enormously exaggerated; why should we believe this more than the rest, till we have some proof? What did you say about the *allocution?* What has that to do with it?'

'I tell you the Pope disowns our soldiers; he says they shall only fight on the frontier, the false poltroon. Saints, what do I say? yet he is, he is; we shall see if his word can hold them back. *Ahimè!* idiots that we were to believe in him. Nino, Nino, is that you? come in, I am here, have you heard? Come, quick — you have heard of the Pope's speech.'

'Yes,' replied Cecchi, briefly, and he looked round at the dismayed group with a gleam of triumph so sinister that it struck them all, and silenced even his wife's volubility. 'Yes,' he repeated, 'did I not tell you long ago how much a Pope's professions were worth? Long ago I prophesied that he would turn against us at the critical moment. A priest, a reformer! It has been a grand parade, truly. Miserable farce! only a generation of moles and asses could have put their trust in a Pope. Ah, ha! he has found our reforms becoming too earnest; Silvani was too wise, too honest, and he is dead. He breakfasted with kind Cardinal Antonelli, excellent Cardinal Antonelli! and found his chocolate unwholesome.'

'True, true, if he had lived, things would have been otherwise,' chimed in Madama Cecchi, catching at the allusion to the sudden death of the eminent lawyer who had been appointed to revise the code. Cardinal Antonelli was supposed to have borne a grudge against him, and popular prejudice laid a death, easily accounted for by natural causes, to the prelate's door.

Vincenzo contented himself by taking up the defence of Pio Nono, and left the cardinal's character to clear itself.

'I only see that the Pope is a timid, scrupulous man in a most difficult position,' said he; 'but I do think this step so ill-advised, so frantic, that I expect that it will be retracted.'

'Ay, the ministry, too, think it ill-advised. They have resigned. We shall see what comes of that.'

'Why a republic — no more traitors to rule us .... Madonna Santa Catarina! what am I saying? I did not mean it; pardon me!' said Madama Cecchi. 'See, I must be Italian; count it not against me; and this Pio is really a traitor.'

'With or without the saints, we will have a republic,' said her husband, vehemently, but with a singular rapt look coming over his face, as like that of a dreamy mystic, carried away by a vision. 'Away with all this pomp of Babylon, fire is already kindled upon the earth, the sword hangs over Rome, Elias is come, the cry of the saints is heard in heaven!' He paused, with suspended breath and intent, abstracted gaze; Vincenzo and Irene watched him as if fascinated; his wife anxiously seized his arm. 'What is this? what do you say? are you mad, Nino?' He turned his eyes upon her, but did not seem to see her; then, starting, gasped and asked hurriedly: 'Did I speak? Why, I said — I said — we would have a republic — ay, that was it; now is our time, we are hopeless fools if we lose it.'

'You are wrong,' said Vincenzo; 'don't you see that this is no time for founding a new government, which must creep before it can walk; there is some strength in this one; work with the tools you have at hand, my friend; the present is worth more than two futures.'

'I know your doctrines by heart, Signor Vincenzo. You moderates should talk them to the angels, who neither rebelled nor stood firm, but were only for themselves,' said Cecchi, with a sardonic smile on his thin lips. 'Rome will never be Rome till she has swept out all the abominations of Pope and priest, and the lobsters of the German college, and the rooks of the English, and all the heap of them. Rome is for the people. We want no priests or kings; when the war of the kings is over, that of the people will begin. By and by you will see what

Charles Albert is made of. Don't talk to me of the Pope's conscience. If he cannot reconcile his temporal with his spiritual power, let him abdicate.'

'His duty is to govern to the best of his ability; he has no right to abdicate,' said Vincenzo.

'Hark, hark to the uproar!' cried Madama Cecchi, flying to the window, and gazing into the street, where a crowd were rushing along, shouting and gesticulating. 'Hear how they cry out! only hear!' and they could plainly distinguish the shouts of 'Treachery, treachery! death to the cardinals! death to the traitor Mattei! down with Lambruschini!'

'Signor Cecchi, you belong to the civic guard,' said Vincenzo, eagerly; 'all this is frantic; it should be put down instantly; why are you still here?'

Cecchi shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and leisurely went to assume his uniform; but others were more prompt, and the threatened riot was quelled. His strange unconscious speech haunted Irene, who long speculated on it, while it likewise occupied her brother's thoughts. The looks and language befitted a religious fanatic; and Vincenzo had long suspected Cecchi of an abhorrence of the Romish Church, but was at loss to imagine with what sect he could have connected himself, since apparently there were no Italian Protestants in Rome, though it was whispered that some existed in Tuscany and North Italy, holding lonely meetings in woods and caves where no persecutor could track them. Was Cecchi connected with any of these? Vincenzo had noticed before, that a strong tinge of mysticism pervaded Cecchi's speeches when he was excited; and now divined that he combined enmity to the Government that had injured him with the zeal of a religious enthusiast.

Rome was on the very brink of revolution, shipwrecked on that rock over which Pio Nono had vainly tried to steer, the difficulty of governing both as prince and prelate. In granting a constitutional government, he had done all he could; to go a step further would be to compromise the sacred dignity which it was his charge to keep. He had not in the least foreseen the effect of his energetical letter, which affected all Italy, dispiriting Piedmont, and above all, enraging Bologna — Bologna, haughty

in comparative independence, proud of her antiquity and her great men, and for ages at variance with Rome. One revolution had failed in a former reign because Rome and Bologna would not act together; but now that the common cause had swallowed up these unworthy jealousies, Bologna had held out friendly hands, and not only welcomed the Roman volunteers on their way, but sent many of her own citizens to the war. At Rome the agitation became excessive; the *Circoli* were besieged by crowds flocking to hear Sturbini and others; the civic guard were disaffected, and the Pope was so much alarmed as actually to meditate taking refuge at Milan. Like others of his projects it ended in nothing, and after much disgraceful disorder, a new Ministry was formed by Mamiani, a man in ill odor with Pio Nono; for he was one of the few who had refused to take the oath of allegiance when he availed himself of the amnesty, and had written works prohibited by the *Index*. Pio Nono was bent on peace; his Ministry on war; Mamiani took his own way, and the Pope alternately murmured and submitted. In fact, from this time, the revolution may be said to have begun, and the idea of a republic grew more and more familiar.

The Pope lost no time in publishing an address intended to calm the Romans, but he had himself broken his magic wand; they had loved him as the patriot, they now abhorred him as the traitor; they thought he had deceived, juggled, betrayed them — and he thought them guilty of intense ingratitude. Alas! he and they suffered for the sins of his predecessors. Had former Popes accustomed them to liberty they would have known how to use it in the days of Pio Nono.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Glory to Thee in Thine Omnipotence,
Who dost dispense,
As seemeth best to Thine unerring will,
Which passeth mortal sense,
The lot of victory still;
Edging sometimes with might the sword unjust,
And bowing to the dust,
The rightful cause; that so much seeming ill
May Thine appointed purposes fulfil.

SOUTHEY.

ILL news began to thicken, and the gloomy forebodings of the alarmists in Rome were fully justified. Disasters and mistakes checked the victorious course of Charles Albert. King Ferdinand recalled the troops which the pressure of popular feeling had compelled him to send to assist the Piedmontese army, and thus fatally crippled its operations. Each account from Upper Italy was worse than the last; from time to time a volunteer returned to Rome, wounded, sick, haggard, a mere shadow of the gallant, confident soldier who had marched out amid music and huzzas a few months before. Many, many a Roman had fallen in battle or died of marsh fever, or been shot like a dog by the Croats when taken prisoner, and a voice of weeping that could not be stilled arose in Rome. Distrust in their leaders, and in the noble Charles Albert, was studiously sown in the Piedmontese army by Austrian agents, or by miserable men who preferred seeing Italy enslaved to seeing her owe her independence to a king — men who denounced Azeglio and Count Balbo, because they were true-hearted royalists, as they had proved by their wounds. Reports of treachery were spread in the army; a

rumor got abroad that the Pope had excommunicated it; the men were so discouraged that the unhappy engagement of Corunda broke the spirit of the whole army; many of the soldiers deserted, others were disbanded; step by step the Austrians regained all the ground they had lost, and those who loved Italy best saw with eyes wet with indignant tears, that the campaign so glorious when it commenced had ended — like how many Italian hopes — in a miserable failure. It had not been the brightness of the steady dawn, only a false meteor. That manifesto of the Pope's served the Austrians better than if he had sent them a new army. Do any wonder that his people found it hard to forgive him? He was a disappointment incarnate to them. But in spite of reverses, and manifesto, and traitors, the high-spirited Romans for the most part stood firm, held to Durando, and betook themselves to Padua and Vicenza.

Direct communications from the volunteers came seldom to Rome; but occasionally Leone succeeded in sending a few lines to Vincenzo or Irene — missives waited for with breathless suspense, few and far between; and how many heart-aches were there in the intervals for Irene! The first enthusiastic glow of hope had quite faded, and all Rome waited in inexpressible anxiety for future events. A far longer time than usual elapsed, and still no news came to Irene — then worse than none, for a hurried despatch from Ravelli to his mother named Leone as wounded — the brief fact was stated, and no more. Irene could hear nothing. She had never known what anxiety was till now; she even began to sympathize with Gemma, whose worn face showed what she suffered. She was less happy in one respect than Irene, for Ravelli had no means of communicating with her; she was dependent on others for all news of him.

Irene's time was not her own; she had still to attend rehearsal, to appear at the theatre of an evening, to study hard, and combat all the difficulties and vexations which seem inseparable from the life of a *prima donna*. It was well for her; the suspense might have driven her distracted, had she had nothing to divert her thoughts from the one great trouble. She was better off assuredly than Gemma, who had nothing but her embroidery to occupy her, till ennui well-nigh ate her heart out. But it was

such a strain as must sooner or later tell on mind and body, and only the strong will, and the habit of public life, could have enabled Irene to endure it; and night after night she sang gloriously, with all her powers excited by mental pain, and then left the theatre, her eyes overflowing with scalding tears, utter prostration taking the place of excitement. The fever of her mind only added power and pathos to her acting; never had she seemed so inspired as at this time; the public little guessed how different their favorite looked when she left the theatre yet ringing with applause, and sought the carriage where Maddalena waited for her. For Mademoiselle Mori was now too celebrated to go and come in her old unobtrusive manner; she had her own carriage. Often when she had entered it, she would sink back too much exhausted to speak a word, and Maddalena only manifested her sympathy by looks, putting her strong arm round her, and almost carrying her up-stairs when they reached the palace.

Count Clementi watched for her one night when she had been singing with boundless applause, and sprang after her into the carriage. 'Irene, you will allow me? I must tell you how gloriously you sang to-night — you might have represented Italy herself, as you stood there with your violet crown! Who would not be a patriot who heard you?'

But she was lying back with closed eyes; their lashes rested on a colorless cheek, and she made no attempt to answer him, or to withdraw the ice-cold hand which he had taken.

'Is she ill? is she often thus?' he asked of Maddalena, who looked sorrowfully compassionate but in nowise surprised at the state her young mistress was in.

'No, *eccelenza*. It has often been thus of late,' she briefly answered.

'She should see a physician — does her brother know? Are you mad to see this so tranquilly?' exclaimed Clementi.

A faint smile unclosed Irene's lips; it seemed so singular to hear herself spoken of as if she were not present, and to be too weary even to remind them that she could hear.

'It is the long waiting for the absent, signor,' said Maddalena, in a low voice; 'she kept up till she heard of his wound.'

'Irene! speak to me! I cannot bear to see you suffer thus,'

said Clementi, passionately; 'I would give my life to comfort you. You are wearing yourself out; have mercy on yourself, if not on me, and give up this profession which is killing you.'

'The profession is guiltless enough,' she answered, rousing herself and trying to smile. 'I could not live without it. My thoughts are occupied when I am in the theatre. It is at night — oh, what dreams haunt me! Night is very terrible — very cruel. I see Lucio Naldi for ever before me, or Angelo di Rosa, who was shot in cold blood by Radetsky's soldiers, and I fancy —' she broke off with one of those deep, gasping sighs which exhaust rather than relieve.

Count Clementi was gazing at her with what she took for sympathy. At that moment he hated Leone so intensely, that even if it were to have killed Irene, he would have rejoiced to know him to be in the young painter's place.

The carriage stopped at the foot of the great staircase; Irene alighted and took the arm which he offered to assist her upstairs, but paused to say earnestly, 'Say nothing to Vincenzo, I entreat of you; he is far too anxious already, both for me and for Leone,' and she spoke the word lingeringly, as if she loved to utter that name.

'I must, Irene. I cannot see you in this state without warning him.'

'You have not the smallest right to interfere,' she answered with the impatience of an overwrought spirit. 'It is my own affair entirely.'

'True,' he replied, and voice and look told that he was deeply wounded.

'Forgive!' said Irene.

'What have I to forgive? That you love another?'

'I do,' she answered, stopping abruptly and clasping both hands on her breast. 'If you could take my heart, and hold it to your ear like a sea shell, you would hear Leone's name — nothing else — that always, always murmuring there.'

'I doubt it not, Irene. Long ago you showed me that I was to be nothing to you; that my life was wasted for your sake. I would have thrown it down at your feet; you cared nothing for it. I could not win one thought from you, to whom I gave all

man has to give. You were another's. I loved you before he did — but that counted for nothing. I have not forgotten, Irene; you need not remind me.'

'Oh, this is not generous,' murmured Irene, much agitated by the suppressed passion with which he spoke, and by his keen reproaches. 'Forgive me if I was ungrateful — he is away — I cannot listen to such words as these.'

'Were you generous, Irene? But enough of this, it is in vain.'

She was shaken from head to foot by her agitation, for she had used up all her strength of late; she could not answer, and he supported her to her own door, without another word, and led her in. The voices of Cecchi and his wife were heard in some distant room in eager consultation; Menica opened the door and began a hurried '*Signorina mia* —' which the count cut short with a sign, and opened the sitting-room door.

Late as it was, two figures sat within, Vincenzo, who raised himself in haste as they entered; another, in a soldier's uniform — his eyes were bright but sunken; there was a feverish color on the thin dark cheeks, it was a mere spectre of that Leone whose name burst from Irene's lips; but he *was* returned, he *was* returned, and with a cry she fell into the arms stretched out to her, and was clasped close to his breast.

She rested there for a while in speechless happiness, and no one spoke; but raising herself at last, she looked up in his face, and uttered his name. He replied by a caress, and now fully realizing what had happened, she exclaimed 'Leone, Leone, tell me it is really you! how came you back? Is the war over? Make me feel that it is really you — that you are here.'

He smiled and clasped her closer. 'My Irene, I should not be here with my own good will now, but I was wounded in a skirmish, and Sturbinetti was in as bad a plight; so Durando sent us back to Bologna together, while I was too ill to know what they were about, and thence we were ordered here by a despotic commander in the shape of a doctor, so you will have to nurse me.'

She looked at him and saw now what Vincenzo had dreaded would both shock and startle her, how ghastly Leone looked,

reduced by fever and fatigue, his brow disfigured by a deep sword-cut.

'Leone!' she exclaimed in alarm; but quickly recovering, 'Ah, now you will be so well nursed that you must get strong directly. You will not be able to help it! You are really come back! you were here an hour ago, and yet I was fretting. Oh, can it be the same day?'

Count Clementi had stood a mute spectator, his white lips quivering, but now he advanced and took Leone's hand. 'Welcome, friend. What news of the war?'

'I know nothing new; I was carried in a fever to Bologna, and as soon as I could move I was ordered on here. There is little to tell that is good.'

'And Vincenzo was the first to welcome you! Leone, can you tell us anything of Luigi? his mother is very anxious,' said Irene, so happy herself that she could not resist the wish of letting Gemma have a chance of hearing good news.

'When did you hear of him last? I left him in the highest health and spirits; he has turned out a splendid soldier. I have often thought of your padrona's description of him — *è una saetta scatenata* [an arrow let loose.] His course was nearly ended though at a little village which it was necessary to take: we were ordered to advance; a concealed battery began to play upon us out of a mulberry plantation. The command to capture it was given; we galloped at it, the grape-shot hissing over our heads — Luigi discovered a path which led, clear from trees, right to it — he dashed forward, all the rest following — cut down an artilleryman who was making ready to give us another discharge, and the same instant the Croats were upon us; the officer in command cut at Luigi, and a dozen men pressed round to drag him from his horse — he fought like a madman, but if Auster had not fought as desperately as his master and fairly bounded out of their hands, we should have been too late to save Luigi.'

'I must tell Signora Ravelli to-morrow — and Imelda! Leone, tell me about your wound.'

'I got it in a skirmish.'

'It must have been a terrible one!'

'That and marsh fever did the business for me between them.'

'What news of the Cardellas?' asked Vincenzo.

Leone's face saddened. He put his hand into the breast of his coat and drew out a book of prayers; the pages were stained with blood. 'There!' he said in a deeply moved voice, 'Ercole Cardella gave me that for his poor old father. It is all that is left of the two brothers. We lost young Francesco in Castelnuovo; he fell close by Ercole's side; those two were no more apart in war than in peace — Damon and Pythias to the last — poor fellows! Ercole knelt over him while the shot was falling as thick as rain about us — men dropping on all sides. The poor lad was dead — we could do nothing but advance and leave him; but, when we halted for the night, Ercole asked me if I would go back with him, and we went and found the body — we dug the boy a grave with our swords in the churchyard, and there he lies. Ercole took this book from the poor lad's breast — stained with his life blood. It was their father's gift just before they left Rome. God help him — he has no child left. I shall not forget in my lifetime the look with which Ercole said, "He trusted the boy to me!" I knew he had made up his mind that he should not long outlive his brother, and so it was; he was dashed to pieces by a shell next day. Nothing can give you an idea of the horrors of Castelnuovo; a literal massacre; not a thing was spared by the Austrians but a goat which rushed among them out of the flames. The ground was covered by half-burned bodies of men, and women, and children — the place was a pest-house. For weeks I had the shrieks for mercy ringing in my ears; we saw, and could not help the poor wretches!'

'Horrible!' said Irene, shuddering.

'One hardly dares to ask after any one,' said Vincenzo; 'but Guidi?'

'Gloriously killed,' Leone answered; then kindling with the recollection; 'yes, that was a death to envy! He charged, at the head of a handful of men, a Croat battalion as they crossed a bridge, dashed through them and seized their colors, sabring the man who held them, and fell himself, pierced by a hundred shot. I caught the colors from him, and was knocked over the

next moment, and that was when I got my wound. It was our best time, for except Verona and Mantua the Austrians had not a stronghold left that was worth anything. If orders had been transmitted rapidly, we should have had Verona — the army came up by mistake in three divisions and at different times, and that ruined us.'

'But you, Leone? what became of you?'

'Well, I had had all the sense knocked out of me, and was left for dead; the first thing I remember is waking up to a consciousness of pain and intense thirst; it was moonlight, and I heard a stream somewhere, but could not crawl to it. As I moved, I touched something cold, a dead hand. There were four or five of our men, and of the Austrians lying about, dead and dying. I got delirious; I imagined myself in Castelnuovo again, and that the groans of a poor fellow near me were Francesco Cardella's, and then the Croats came on the scene in my vision dancing and shouting among dead bodies, as they did at that doomed place, while all the town was wrapped in blue smoke, with flames bursting out here and there from a burning house, and cannon thundering. It was that scene again and again, all night long, and always the craving for water. At last I found myself on a mattress in a tent, and Padre Rinaldi beside me.'

'Ah, every one whom we have seen has spoken of him.'

'Well they may. Unwearied in preaching — ever by deathbeds and by the sick — I owe him my life; he came to the place where he heard I had fallen, expressly to see if there were any life left in me. I have seen him repeatedly where there was most danger, confessing a dying man or binding up wounds. Strange! though all that night is like a wild horrible dream, I seem to recall his pale face bending over me, and holding a lantern to mine. I escaped while many brave men perished — perished in vain!'

'Ay,' said Clementi.

'Now, Leone, not another word to-night! you are my prisoner now; you must stay here, especially as you have no lodgings now anywhere. I am going to talk to Madama Cecchi about it.'

'I will not be art and part in keeping him up any longer,' said Count Clementi, and he bade them all good night. Irene looked

up at him anxiously; he had entirely recovered his self-control, and bade her a very kind, but calm good night. She sought Madama Cecchi, who was waiting to congratulate her, and had already planned to give Leone Mrs. Dalzell's vacant room, and had arranged all for his comfort. Cecchi went to assist him, and the tired soldier was soon installed in his apartment, too weary and excited to sleep, and scarcely wishing it, so pleasant was it to feel that he was again among friends. Irene lingered in the sitting-room above till Cecchi came to assure her he had taken every possible care of his guest. She looked up at the portrait of her mother, when again left alone, as if she would have asked her to share her happiness; to her excited fancy there seemed a smile on those pictured lips. 'Ah, mother, you have never looked so since he went!' Irene said aloud, and she went to Vincenzo's room; her happiness was not complete until shared by her brother.

'Yes, we are very happy, thank God, my darling,' he said as she leant over him, and pressed her lips to his. 'Good night, my own dear sister, my dear Irene!'

CHAPTER XXVII.

Campagna, che di te me ne fidavo,
E tutti i miei segreti a te dicevo:
E tu eri innamorata del mio damo,
Ed io meschina non me ne avvedevo!
Campagna fosti, e campagna sarai:
E lo mio Damo me lo renderai.
RISPETTO.

AT noonday in August, Rome is literally asleep. The shops are shut, the gay awnings over their windows hang motionless in the sultry air, the green persiani outside the windows of private houses are closed; pavements and walls reflect the burning heat, not a creature is seen abroad, except here and there some threadbare figure standing idly, hat in hand, with nothing to do, lounging in an archway, or on the shady side of the street, or sitting at the door of a *café*, drinking lemonade at a stall; or perhaps two lads may be seen playing at *mora* or the equally beloved *maroncino* — (pitch and toss), or a fat and bearded monk goes by, fan in hand.

At three o'clock some life reawakens in the city, the hours of the *siesta* are over, the shops re-open, so do the churches, the sultry heat slightly abates; but there is no real freshness till after sunset, when the glare vanishes, the baked ground and walls become cooled, the sky assumes its deepest purple, shrubs and plants drink in the dew and lift up their parched leaves, and the Romans pour forth to inhale the evening breeze.

Once a week, however, Rome is alive at a much earlier hour, when the citizens refresh themselves with a kind of bath in Piazza Navona, and thither Irene and Vincenzo drove one August afternoon. They called for Imelda at Casa Olivetti, according to a previous appointment, and she came dancing to meet

them, and sprang like a bird to her seat by Irene's side, with Tevere for a *vis-à-vis*, sitting upright by Vincenzo. 'I am so glad you have come!' she exclaimed. 'I have watched for you this hour past! Mamma has gone to the Trinità, and I had nobody but Crescenzia to talk to. When we have been to the piazza, you must take me to St. Ignazio; I told mamma I knew you would. How is the padrona to-day?'

'*In villeggiatura* at Frascati.'

'Oh! I forgot — is pretty Menica gone too? What a nice carriage! Irene, do you know, people still wonder very much that you live so quietly. They say nobody in Rome lives so quietly and dresses so plainly as Mademoiselle Mori, but mamma says it is quite right and does you credit.'

'We are not extravagant, certainly, Imeldina; suppose I were to lose my voice!'

'Oh, what an idea! I should pray every day to Santa Cecilia, if I were you, to preserve it. Why did not Signor Nota come? Is he not well enough?'

'His sister, Signora Bianchi, came in just before we left home,' said Irene, returning mentally to a speculation which had occupied her as they drove along as to whether Assunta's husband had intended this visit as a step towards reconciliation.

'Assunta talked him into it,' said Vincenzo, guessing her thoughts.

'I suppose so.'

'I wish Signor Nota would get well faster; he still looks so ill,' said Imelda.

'If he wished it less himself, he would be much better than he is,' said Vincenzo; 'he is enough to throw any one into a fever with his impatience to be gone again! He informed me to-day with triumph, that he had walked four times round our *loggia!* Can you imagine, Imelda, why a man who is comfortable at home with his friends, can want to go back to a place where he got a wound and a fever?'

She laughed, and answered, 'He is a soldier.'

'There are some who would not comprehend that logic,' muttered Vincenzo, as he thought of sundry volunteers who had

taken the first opportunity of returning home, on the strength of the Pope's speech, and who now trumpeted their loyalty at every opportunity.

'I shall be glad when this hot weather goes,' said Irene, involuntarily drawing a deep breath, as she thought how it oppressed Leone.

'Is it true, that he and Signor Bianchi are not friends?' asked Imelda.

'Who says so?'

'Oh, many people have talked about it at our house.'

'About as good friends as Count Clementi and his uncle.'

'Assunta is very anxious to make them friends again,' said Irene; 'and she said to-day that, if Leone would make the first step, her husband would most likely meet him half way, and procure another appointment for him, as of course he has lost his old one in the *Dateria*. But he expects a sort of apology from Leone, who has put up with a great deal already for Assunta's sake; and really he is not in the least called on to beg pardon for his liberal views. Besides, he hopes to be in Lombardy soon.'

'You will let him go again?'

'Why, I must,' said Irene, half playfully, half seriously; 'but we shall keep him till he is well. He knows it would be useless to go yet awhile.'

'Piazza Navona,' announced Vincenzo, as they drove down one of the streets leading to the square, where a busy market is held of a morning. One day it is of piled-up fruit and vegetables, where Roman housewives, or oftener their husbands, argue, cheapen, and buy; for it is the husbands who transact all the household money-matters of the middle-class. Another day the market is of china, provisions, old iron, and old books, which cumber the stalls and the ground — a motley, noisy scene; but now the whole piazza was converted by closing the pipes which usually carry off the water from the fountains into a lake, wherein carriages drove up and down, the occupants exchanging mirthful greetings with their acquaintances. Bare-legged boys splashed about, chased each other, and played pranks; a crowd stood to gaze from the streets which led into the piazza; a band of music

performed lively opera airs in a balcony; and a shabby-looking poet stood reciting on the steps of the church of St. Agnese, where the market women go to pray for chastity. His theme was the 'lake in piazza, more limpid than Como, more sunny than Maggiore; more blessed than all the lakes of Switzerland since it reflected the dome of St. Agnese and the sky of Italy!' and the passers-by threw him small coins from their carriages, and laughed at his allusions to each as they drove past him. The water splashed beneath the wheels, clamorous voices filled the air; Irene and Vincenzo entered heartily into the spirit of the scene, and Imelda clapped her hands with delight, while Tevere, sitting with silken ears erect on the seat by his master, barked with all his might, as if to add to the manifold sounds.

'Drive slowly — let us hear what he is saying,' called Vincenzo to the coachman as they approached the poet, who probably had seen Irene at the theatre; for, bowing low, he immediately produced a couplet about the Syren of Piazza Navona, more witching than any heard by Ulysses in the grots of Sorrento. This won great applause from all near, together with a shower of silver coins, while Irene laughed and returned his profound obeisance; but Tevere, actuated by some unknown canine motive, bounced out of the carriage; snatched the poet's greasy hat out of his hand, and conveyed it to Vincenzo amid universal laughter and applause. Vincenzo took the hat, but refused to readmit the dripping dog, who retreated up the steps of the church and waited there. The poet did not miss so good an opportunity, and his admiration for the young *prima donna*, and Tevere's adventure with the hat, figured in a new stanza, till Vincenzo, thinking they had had enough, bade the coachman drive on; and, when they next came near the steps, Irene handed the hat and a donation to the fortunate owner — 'unspeakably fortunate,' so his next verse ran; 'since his unworthy hat had been sanctified by the touch of Mademoiselle Mori, it had become an immortal laurel crown!'

There were none but natives present on this afternoon; Rome tempts not the foreigner in August, and even of the Romans, a great number were in the country, keeping *villeggiatura*. It was a thoroughly Roman scene, and thoroughly enjoyed by those who

partook of it; but, after an hour or so, Vincenzo found himself wearied out, and Irene quickly perceiving it proposed to go home. So they drove out of the *lago*, to the church of St. Ignazio, where Imelda's maid was waiting for her, and there Irene left her.

The church of St. Ignazio, as its name imports, belongs to the Jesuits, and is dedicated to their founder, Ignatius Loyola. It displays all the lavish color, light, and ornament, the precious marbles and the gilding, the style of architecture, especially patronized by them, and which exactly suits the Roman taste. In Sant' Ignazio is the chapel of San Luigi Gonzaga, on whom not a few of the young Roman damsels look with something of the same kind of admiration as did Clytie on Apollo, whom he and St. Sebastian, those two young, beautiful, graceful saints, very fairly represent in Christian mythology. His *festa* falls in June, and then his altar is embosomed in flowers, arranged with exquisite taste; and a pile of letters may be seen at its foot, written to the saint by young men and maidens, and directed to Paradiso. They are supposed to be burnt unread, except by San Luigi, who must find singular petitions in these pretty little missives, tied up now with a green ribbon, expressive of hope, now with a red one, emblematic of love, or whatever other significant color the writer may prefer.

San Luigi Gonzaga was the patron saint of Ravelli; Imelda seldom failed to pray daily at his altar for her absent betrothed; and, if the truth were known, a certain little note laid before the altar that year directed 'to the angelic youth, San Luigi Gonzaga, in Paradiso,' contained an entreaty for Ravelli's safety in the campaign, and was written by Imelda. She was not the only one who sought this altar for Ravelli's sake. As she and her maid rose from their knees, they saw Gemma Clementi approaching. The contessina's cheeks became scarlet as she recognised Imelda, who timidly saluted her, and asked if Signora Clementi, her aunt, were there also.

'Yes, she goes into *villeggiatura* to-morrow, and she wished to confess first. Are you going this year?'

'No, mamma says she had rather not, as papa is away; she never goes anywhere without him. Are you going?'

'No,' said Gemma, discontentedly; 'we don't go anywhere —

my uncle and aunt go, but as for mamma, she is like Signora Olivetti, and stays at home; but you do go out, when Signor Olivetti is at home — I never go anywhere.'

'You know we do not go to Albano or Frascati, only to papa's *masseria* [farm] in *il Regno*. It used to be my uncle's, and when he died papa had it, and we have gone there nearly every summer ever since I can remember. One year, when I was not well, we stayed there six months.'

'But that must be dull — don't you wish you went to L'Arricia?'

'Oh, there is no place that I like so much as the *masseria*. We have three rooms when we are there, and the tenants have the rest, and I help Annunciata to spin, and see to the silkworms, and feed the poultry. There is a court with a well, where it is always cool, and a garden — olives and orange trees — and a shady path close to the edge of the cliffs; the sea is below, and you can get down to the shore directly by a winding way.'

'I did not expect to find you here,' said Gemma, whose thoughts were elsewhere than in the *masseria*. 'I thought you always came very early to mass.'

'I do, generally, with mamma, but she is at the Trinità to-day, and Crescenzia was busy all the morning,' said Imelda, looking at her attendant.

Gemma gave a guilty glance at the mild face of San Luigi depicted above the altar, as if she feared that Imelda must divine the motive that brought her there. 'I must wait for my aunt,' said she, hoping to get news of Ravelli by detaining Imelda, but inwardly enraged at having to seek it through such a channel. 'Will you stay a few minutes? we can sit on this bench.'

Imelda was too timid to refuse, little as she liked her companion, and sat down. Gemma continued, 'You don't confess here? Oh no, I remember now who your confessor is — are you not afraid of him? he is said to be horribly strict.'

'He is so kind,' answered Imelda; 'mamma sees my confessions before I make them to him; I write them out and she helps me; thus I know exactly what I ought to tell him, and he is so patient with me.'

'But people say he is the most particular confessor in Rome. That would not please me, and it is the reason why he has so few penitents. Our confessor says he has at least four times as many as yours, and hears so many confessions that I am sure he has not time to ask about every little folly; and, besides, he knows he should lose his penitents, if he were too severe.'

'I understand,' said Imelda, not entirely satisfied.

'But you can't have many sins to confess,' continued Gemma; 'that you thought of Luigi Ravelli at mass, I suppose, or said his name instead of an *Ave Maria? Approposito* — has his father forgiven him yet for going without leave?'

'Oh, he pretends to be very angry still, but he cannot help looking happy and proud when they hear of him; and Luigi has distinguished himself so much, that he is made captain. Signora Ravelli came to tell us, and afterwards the signor came in, and though he would not be the first to speak of it, he was longing all the time for mamma to begin.'

'When did you hear of him last?'

'Signora Ravelli had a little letter, just after the armistice was proclaimed.'

'Armistice?' cried Gemma, with flashing eyes.

'Have you not heard?'

'Nothing! Pietrucchio does not speak of public news to us women — I hear nothing! What armistice? is the war over?'

'Oh, I fear so,' said Imelda, seriously.

'Fear! Then he is coming home!' said Gemma, pressing her hands on her heart to still its violent throbbings. 'Ah, San Luigi, I ——' she stopped herself just in time, but Imelda was already looking at her with wonder.

'How can you feel glad, Gemma? it is terrible news; Milan is given up again to these evil Austrians, and our army is defeated! Poor Luigi must be so grieved!'

'Oh, he will be comforted by coming home — Are you not in Rome, Imeldina? where else would he be? When do you expect him?'

'I cannot guess; he has joined Garibaldi, and we heard that two little steamers had been surprised by Garibaldi's men; and

that they had fought for a long time in the mountains of Lago Maggiore, and were now at Arona.'

Gemma gazed at her with pale, menacing looks. 'What do you say?'

Imelda repeated her statement, and there was a pause, during which Gemma summoned all her self-command to her aid. She succeeded in asking presently with calmness, 'Do you ever hear from Ravelli?'

'I had one letter after they reached Bologna.'

'Only one?'

'Only one; he cannot possibly have time to write, and besides so many letters get lost.'

'Oh,' said Gemma, sharply, piqued by her confidence in Luigi, 'you really are very trustful;' and her black eyes glanced daggers at her innocent rival.

As the two girls sat side by side, even a cursory glance told that Gemma had the advantage of Imelda, as far as striking figure and features went. Her face recalled those of the bold, handsome women of no good repute, whose likenesses sculpture has preserved for us — the women of imperial, degraded Rome. Not a few busts in the Vatican might have passed as more or less correct likenesses of the young contessina. Such as it was, her beauty appealed at once to the senses; while the little, shy, graceful Imelda, with no beauty except the eyes which contained such wealth of liquid softness in their brown depths, might steal into the heart or touch the imagination, but were more likely to attract women than men. She seemed to shrink out of sight, and be *effaced*, to use a French expression, by Gemma.

Signora Clementi now appeared, greeted Imelda, and asked her to walk home with them, as her way to Casa Olivetti lay past the palazzo. She could not refuse, and thus Gemma had the opportunity of resuming the subject of Luigi, and of tormenting Imelda a little more.

'Do you think he loves you very much, Imeldina?'

'I believe so,' was Imelda's naïve answer.

'Why?' demanded Gemma, ready to flame up at this unexpected reply.

'Mamma has often said that she and papa never would let me marry any one who did not love me.'

'How are they to know?'

'Oh, mamma would know, and besides ——' Imelda stopped; for though, like most Italians, she was very naïve and frank in expressing her feelings, something checked her when she was about to tell Gemma of his affectionate farewell, and her conviction that he could not possibly be so dear to her, without his loving her in return. False logic, alas! It was quite as well that she did not address it to Gemma, who remarked next, 'If I were you, I should be afraid to marry him, lest he should turn out a tyrant like his father. You know that old Signor Ravelli is as jealous as a Turk; they say he used to threaten to beat his wife if she even looked out of the window, and he never lets her stir out without him. One might as well not be married as that; one would be freer in a convent; and yet nearly all husbands are as bad. Mine shall find that I am not to be treated like a doll or a baby; I mean to have my liberty and spend my money as I like. Signora Ravelli has to tell her husband how she spends every penny. One might as well be a *zitella* [an old maid] for ever. But one must marry or be a nun.'

'Yes,' assented Imelda.

'My aunt and mamma are always preaching to me that I am getting old — and so I am, almost twenty! but perhaps I may marry and surprise you all yet, Imelda.'

'What are you talking of, Gemma?' asked her aunt.

'Of Piazza Navona, dear aunt,' replied the niece, with unblushing effrontery; 'have you been there yet, Imelda?'

'This very afternoon, with Vincenzo and Irene, and it was so amusing! and we saw Signora de Romanis, and Marchese Allori, and Count Rossi; he was there for a little while with two Frenchmen, and there was a *poeta da dozzina* who made verses on every one.'

'I see Count Rossi now,' said Gemma, standing still; 'look, he reads a newspaper in the French library; stay a little moment, aunt; do you see him? What a hard, proud face! and how his lips curve! I should like to know what he is reading.'

'He lives in Palazzo Buoncorsa just opposite,' said her aunt; 'I should like to know what keeps him here; everybody knows he is half French, half Austrian at heart.'

And possibly the gazette which he was reading conveyed the same unpleasant hint to the ex-ambassador, who, though a native of Carrara, had been made a peer of France, came as a French minister to Rome, and was looked on very dubiously by the Romans in general. He had none of the Italian suavity, and disdained popularity; but he was a true patriot, and the Pope and the moderates had the justest and highest esteem for Pellegrino Rossi.

A bright-eyed boy came by with a springing step. 'Ha, Imelda!' said he, stopping; 'where are you going?'

'Home, from St. Ignazio. My cousin Filippo,' said she to her companions. 'How is my aunt, and Lalla, Pippo? and *la pupa?*'

'*Non c'è male* — very well. I cannot stop.'

'You look quite a little soldier, Signorino Filippo,' said Signora Clementi.

'I am a soldier, signora,' said the boy, proudly, with a glance at his uniform. 'I belong to the *Speranza*.'

'The *Speranza?* Ah, I remember now — the children's regiment. And are you on your way to parade?'

'Yes, signora; excuse me, I must not linger; a soldier's duty is punctuality, and there are some who set an ill example,' said Filippo, full of impatience, but still showing the courtesy of a little squire of dames. '*Addio*, Imeldina! they say the Pope himself will be present to-day! that is magnificent! though people declare now that he is no *Carbonaro*, but a black *Gregoriano*. *Non mi vale* — if only the war lasts till I am old enough to volunteer. *Addio* once more, signore.'

He darted away. Shortly after two of the Pope's guard appeared, preceding his coach; every one paused as he passed, and some knelt, but there was no enthusiasm manifested. Times were changed indeed; cold looks and a contemptuous murmur followed him; and strangely must the reception he now met with in the streets of his capital have chilled him when he contrasted it with the rapturous acclamations with which he formerly was welcomed.

'Your cousin will be disappointed,' said Signora Clementi to Imelda; 'the Pope is doubtless going to Villa Patrizzi; it is

said he frequently plays billiards there. And so your mamma sometimes lets you go out without her, little one?'

'*Alle volte* with Irene, and with Crescenzia. She has lived with us these nineteen years.'

'Ah, happy is Signora Olivetti to have such a treasure! Well, my dear child, I must bid you farewell here. My respects to your mother; tell her that my husband and I go immediately into *villeggiatura* at L'Arricia.'

'I like the signora much better than Contessa Clementi, Crescenzia,' said Imelda to her maid as they walked on. 'Did you hear what Gemma said to me?'

'She is capricious and a *stravagante*,' said the duenna with austerity; 'do not think of her folly, my child.'

'Oh, I know it is nonsense; I shall tell mamma,' said Imelda, reposing herself in that resolution, and quite satisfied as soon as she had confided the conversation to Signora Olivetti. Happy child, who did not yet know a grief that her mother could not caress away!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

He must serve who fain would sway, and soothe, and sue,
And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living lie, who would become
A mighty thing among the mean.

Manfred.

One Sunday evening, a couple of months later, Count Clementi sat locked up in his room, absorbed in looking over a heap of papers, which he glanced at and arranged, with pauses of deep thought. Those papers contained notes of all important discussions at the *Circoli*, and the secret meetings which he and a few of the ultra-republicans held in profound secrecy; also there were minutes of his mission to France and Germany, as a delegate to such exiles as, having refused the oath of allegiance, could not benefit by the amnesty. Even in those early days, a few in Rome, and not a few in other parts of Italy, had cherished the vision of a general republic; Count Clementi had been selected as their spokesman, and sent to levy supplies, and concert measures in foreign parts. He had conducted his mission ably; he held the proofs of his success in his hand at this moment. In those papers was enough to bring ruin on nearly every family in Rome; for, whatever might be the politics of the fathers, there were few families which had not a liberal among the younger branches — often a member of the secret society, calling itself *Giovane Italia*. If ever the tide should turn, Monsignore Clementi and his party held a net ready to throw over their enemies at one swoop. The young count had done such good service that there were few things which his uncle could have refused him — even if he should demand permission to marry a heretic cantatrice.

Count Clementi sat meditating on the state of public affairs, and of his own private ones; it seemed to him that a crisis in both was absolutely necessary to him. Should the war end and public affairs become quiet, there was nothing to prevent Leone's marriage with Irene. It was clear, that this dangerous rival must be got rid of; but the idea of a stiletto did not please him, especially as in the event of Leone's sudden death, Irene would probably leave Rome. There was a second chance; Leone might fall into such danger, that she would seize on any hope of saving him, even by marriage with another. What more probable, nay certain, than that the *improvvisatore*, the most eminent man in his own party, the one most odious of all to the *Gregoriani*, would be marked out for special vengeance at the first opportunity? And then she ——

'Yes, it is possible,' mused the count, 'possible: there are some whose nature prompts them to grasp at an opportunity for self-sacrifice; she has that nature. Yes, Irene is truth and unselfishness itself — strange that, after all I have seen and known, I should find myself believing entirely in any one, and most of all, that that one should be a woman! Yes, I could work upon her, but Vincenzo — ah, Vincenzo! — no romance there! The fellow takes his stand, and is no more to be moved than a rock — confound his island obstinacy! — common sense, as those English call it. He would never let her sacrifice herself. *Pazzie!* would she ask him? What girl would listen to a brother when a lover is in the case? Stay — Nota out of the way, say — Vincenzo in danger. Ah, ah, Englishman though you are, young Mori, you are too much mixed up with Roman politics for that defence to serve you, once let the other party have the upper hand. Irene, I have waited long, but my time will come; I feel that I shall win you yet.' And so calmly, proudly confident, did the schemer look, as he reviewed his chances, that it was impossible not to believe that he would succeed. He sat still now, laying the papers from his hand, and gazing, as if it were into futurity with dark, steady eyes. Presently his features contracted; he made a movement as if a thought had stung him. 'Consent! he shall consent! Have I no right to demand a reward? If not, then secrecy for a time — he must consent at

last; I am sole representative of our house.' Then again a pause, and a new train of thought arose. 'Our time must come speedily if it come at all. That weak fool, Mamiani, will not be much longer in office; then let us suppose that Rossi comes to the helm. Destruction! that man would ruin everything with his strong hand, and his lay government; no chance of an uproar with him — he must be got rid of. Let us see what monsignore has to say on the subject.'

He rose, gathered and locked up his papers; took a thick book, in which names were arranged alphabetically, with comments opposite to each, and turned to the letter C.

'Cecchi: that man hates Rossi as he does Antonelli — would stiletto either if properly excited. He aims at universal republicanism in Church and State. There are three or four more of that stamp. Count Rossi, your reign may chance to end even more speedily than Mamiani's.'

He put the book in his pocket, opened his window, and stood listening. The tones of a deliciously sweet voice came to his ear; a little crowd was standing in the street below, attracted by it. Irene was singing parts of the *Elijah* of Mendelssohn to Leone and Vincenzo. Their window, too, was open; the thrilling notes floated through it; even the words were audible, so distinctly were they articulated. As Count Clementi stood and listened, his lips relaxed, a look of tenderness came over his face, he stood motionless till the voice ceased, and Irene's fingers dropped on the keys in the sweet and sighing harmony in which Mozart implores '*Dona nobis pacem.*' Then a sigh escaped him; he roused himself, and slowly left the room. If ever man loved woman with all his soul, Clementi loved Irene.

The hour was near the *Ave Maria;* the Pincio was already nearly deserted, but the Corso was full of foot passengers in their best attire, jostling each other off the narrow *trottoir*, and a double file of carriages drove slowly up and down, as usual on Sunday afternoon. It was no easy matter to cross; Count Clementi had to wait with many others, till a carriage stopped somewhere in the ranks, and obliged all the rest to halt also. Those who had been waiting for this opportunity instantly rushed across, taking advantage of the short pause, and Count Clementi

found himself able to continue his way unobserved, for there were few people in any but the main streets. His way led to a lonely, little-frequented church on the outskirts of the city with a convent near it. It was almost on the edge of the Campagna, still clad in the brown and orange tints which it assumes in summer, and does not put off till refreshed by the rainy season. A group of cypresses raised their heads above the convent wall; a barren, neglected tract of ground lay before the church, which was too distant from the city, and too gloomy, to attract many worshippers. There was not even a beggar sitting at the door when the count entered, and a sort of half light prevailed within, but feebly dissipated by the lamp burning before a shrine, and casting tremulous gleams on the marble steps, the porphyry columns, and the old mosaic which looked so spectral and grim in the obscurity.

Count Clementi found himself absolutely alone; he knelt before the altar for a while, perhaps in order to explain his presence to any worshipper who might chance to enter. Unlike most of the young Roman nobles, he was little in the habit of attending the services of his church, and was in this somewhat singular; for though many may believe as little as he did, the outward practice is usually devout. When he did appear in a church, he had invariably some mundane reason for it. A not very creditable assignation had taken him to the *Pastorale* where he first saw Irene, and now his object was, unseen and unsuspected, to meet Monsignore Clementi. The uncle and nephew never now acknowledged each other in public, but the latter had ready means of communicating information to his uncle, and sometimes they met, as on the present occasion. As no one came, the count rose from his knees, and was studying with great devoutness a shabby print of a monk, which was hung on the wall above an inscription inviting all the faithful to contribute alms towards the beatification of the venerable Agostino Modena; when a sound in the sacristy told him that Monsignore Clementi had come, having entered by the convent private way. Accordingly after a glance to see that no one else was there, the nephew sought his uncle.

He first offered a report of the last private meeting which he

had attended; a report of some importance, as it showed how outrageous the desires of the ultra-republicans were becoming, and that they were combining with the men of their own stamp in Tuscany. He next asked if the report that Count Rossi was to be the new Prime Minister were well founded. Very mournfully did his uncle assent, adding, 'This is the heaviest blow that the evil spirits could have aimed at us. That man is infected with reform; he has it in him to carry out all his diabolical plans. I have heard them from his friend A. B., in whom he places great confidence. He makes no secret of his opinions. Up to this time all has gone admirably; matters must soon have come to a crisis; then Austria would have interfered, and all would have been restored as it was formerly. Now, if Rossi has his way, we shall become like France — nay, even like heretic England, where priests have no share in the Government, and their Church is a state machine.'

'Rossi's course will not be a long one, my uncle; he is unpopular, and the people suspect him; the *Contemporaneo* has done its work; look here,' and he produced a number which violently denounced Rossi.

'That is well, that is well,' said Monsignore Clementi, slightly glancing it over. 'Sturbini acts as if he were in my pay. Cardinal L—— was bent on having him arrested the other day — Conceive such folly! these divisions are life to us. Had Mamiani's Ministry lasted longer, what with the papers and with the *Circoli*, we should have had the rebellion we had counted on; but, if the Ministry changes, no one can tell the result. It is possible, however, that Rossi may refuse to take office.'

'Possible,' said the count, dubiously.

'I hear that Nota — the *improvvisatore* — is returned; I thought I recognised his pen again; that is a pestilential fellow, the soul of these moderates.'

'A small and diminishing party, monsignore.'

'Ay, but dangerous, dangerous! You made a mistake, nephew, when you objected to the banishment of young Mori and his sister; their saloon is the very focus of that party, and there is no enemy like a woman, especially with such gifts as I hear *la Mori* has. Now we dare not attack her; she is too popular.'

'Through them I learn the projects of the moderates.'

'So you urged before, my nephew,' said the old man, stroking his chin, and fixing his astute dark eyes on the count; 'but I have an idea — an idea, I say; I am told that —' and he made a significant pause.

Count Clementi never changed a feature though he saw his secret was well nigh divined. He said to himself with a thrill of virtuous indignation, 'What! does he set spies upon me?'

Obtaining no answer, except a look of surprise and a slight smile, the uncle continued, 'You deserve some reward, Pietrucchio, for what you have done for me; I do not count such slight recompenses as I have been able to give; they are nothing, nothing at all. Had Gregorio lived! —' and he glanced at his violet stockings, and sighed profoundly. 'A few weeks more and I had been a cardinal. Fate willed it otherwise; and until the old order of things be restored, which may Heaven grant speedily, I can do nothing important for you.'

He paused, but the count was too wary to be entrapped into a confession.

'I have never asked for a reward, my uncle.'

'You threw away the best chance I had for you, nephew — that marriage! Such a dowry — and influence! Yet you must marry.'

'Possibly the reward I shall claim may be to choose my own wife, monsignore. I have lived so much among liberals that they have infected me with their doctrines. In this matter I could hardly submit, even to you,' said the count, anxious to discover how far this doctrine would be palatable to his companion.

There was an odd, dissatisfied look in Monsignore Clementi's face as he replied, 'One of your name would never choose unwisely. Any wife less noble than yourself would be a disgrace to us — a disgrace, nephew; it could not be.'

The count bowed submissively, and decided that a secret marriage must be his resource. He folded up his newspaper, and said, as if it had recalled the subject to him, 'If you cast your eye over my minutes of the last meeting, you will see that three men swore to poniard Rossi, should he accept office and play false.'

'These republicans are true demons,' said his uncle, with pious horror: 'but Heaven overrules their evil deeds for the good of the Church! Theirs is the sin, but we benefit by it.'

'These are fanatics, but there are others who owe Rossi a private grudge — one in particular, but he disappeared lately; I suppose the police got hold of him. Tito Campana.'

'Eh! Tito — Tito Campana! the fellow who brawled with Rossi's valet! I remember it all now; he is a *protégé* of Marchesa Gentile's, and would have been let off had Rossi been reasonable; but nothing would satisfy him but the galleys. *Gia, gia*, and he was pardoned afterwards. Let me think, what was he condemned for again? I do not remember, but the marchesa petitioned for his pardon again lately; I had her supplication lying on my table yesterday. So the man has a grudge against Rossi!'

'I fancy that Rossi would have experienced it, had not Campana been so speedily re-imprisoned. Will he be released this time?'

'The Pope is merciful, and the matter has been strongly represented to him; Marchesa Gentile is powerful. So Rossi has other enemies!'

Count Clementi opened his book, and pointed to three names in different pages.

'Cecchi —— red republican —— unbeliever —— desperado — hum, hum,' said Monsignore Clementi, muttering over the names and comments to himself, 'Michele Arpione, hum —— excommunicated villains! tell me no more about them, nephew.'

The count smiled imperceptibly, as he reflected that his uncle had taken care to know all he wanted before any scruples seized him, and did not appear likely to arrest the course of events, however much he was scandalized by the actors in them. Taking back the book, Clementi said, 'A crisis is not far off; the moderates hoped to convert the ultras; on the contrary, the ultras have cajoled more than half the moderates, and will speedily spilt with the rest. Nota is not the popular man he was. Then comes the battle.'

'Once get them down, and Pio Nono will not burn his fingers with reforms again. Already he repents; the Jesuits made a

master stroke when they retired voluntarily; he has never had a moment's peace since, and is dying to have them back.'

Some further discourse followed on the events of the day before the uncle and nephew separated. They went out by different doors and at different times, satisfied with their consultation, but both secretly uneasy on one point — namely, Irene. The uncle suspected an attachment which might lead his nephew into some entanglement, perhaps even deprive himself of his invaluable spy; the nephew was indignant at finding that he, too, was not free from his uncle's surveillance, and disturbed by this first encounter with prejudices which he knew to be almost invincible. A heretic, a cantatrice, for the bride of the sole representative of the Clementi in a position to marry! But some day Monsignore Clementi would have to make up his mind to it; and Irene — yes, Irene, would not refuse, if Leone were out of the way, to save Vincenzo even at this price!

The count walked slowly towards the more inhabited part of the city, passing along a deserted road, between high walls, over which a locust tree here and there spread its arms, and ere long he reached a wild region, where vineyards, and gardens, and heaps of nameless ruins, were mingled together. A deserted villa stood, shadowed by gloomy stone pines; and, half buried in masses of ivy and brambles, the broken arches of an aqueduct were overtopped by dark cypress spires. A wall shut in this neglected spot; it was green with moss and tufts of maidenhair; climbing roses, mounting from within, trailed over it; there was a closed door in it, near which a man evidently belonging to the lower class was loitering. A hesitating guilty glance, as though the sight of a stranger of rank were alarming, attracted Clementi's attention, and while apparently sauntering onwards, he turned his head, when he was at some distance, and saw the man pausing at the door and then passing through it. The count turned and walked slowly back again. A second man now came from another direction; his dress showed him to be a bargeman of the Tiber; he too went in, after the same momentary pause, as if some one on the other side had asked for a pass-word before admitting him. Two more came soon afterwards, but they were clearly suspicious of the count, who advanced and asked whether

they had seen a gold seal lying on the road. Both denied hastily and curtly; he bowed, thanked them, and continued to walk up and down, as if searching for it. They loitered, and hesitated, and seemed to consult; and when he had gone nearly out of sight they too entered the garden.

He now felt no doubt that he had lit on some political meeting, and felt extremely ill-used at the bare idea of such a thing taking place unknown to him. His curiosity was strongly excited; he waited for a while, but no one came, and he turned to the door, and gazed through the bars of the upper part. Nothing was to be seen, but long grass and giant nettles growing rank beneath the trees. He drew back and looked up at the wall, speedily determined that it was too high to be scaled, and made a circuit, examining it narrowly. A door leading into a neighboring vineyard was unlocked; he went through, and came to the side nearest the garden. Here he again found the wall, but one part of it was low, and a bank of earth rose against it. The ground in the garden was considerably higher than that in the vineyard. Count Clementi stood considering with a muttered '*Oh, adagio!*' speedily made up his mind, spied out a place where his foot could rest beneath a bush of strong old golden-berried ivy, and scrambling up by it like a cat, he dropped into the garden below.

He alighted in a clump of prickly aloe and cactus, which made him wince and stamp, but he suppressed the oath which sprang to his lips, and glided noiselessly into the shrubs, eye and ear alert, for well he knew what the fate of a spy would be if detected among conspirators. He did not want for courage, or he would not have been there; and he had a sense of excitement, even enjoyment, in the perilous adventure, which quickened his pulses, and roused every sense into double activity, while he advanced towards the centre of the garden, where, amid a jungle of tall reeds and further sheltered by the drooping boughs of a pepper tree, he crouched down and observed the scene.

Evening had fully come, the October moon was up in an intensely purple sky; her beams lighted the ruined stately arches, but could not penetrate the cavernous shadows beneath them, silvered the reeds, danced on the ripe fruit of the orange-trees,

and stole into the little empty Belvedere, showing the frescoes dropping in decay from its walls. The ilexes and cypresses seemed blacker than ever under her light. There was perfect stillness; except when a bird woke and chirped, or the bell of a convent somewhere near tinkled. All was tranquillity and desolation; the owners of the villa, which stood white and cold on the rising ground, had left it to solitude and malaria; but others had taken possession in their place.

In an open grassy space some nineteen or twenty men, and a very few women, were assembled, all of the poorest classes; their careworn faces and anxious eyes looked from beneath the broad grey hats of the men, and the shawls which the women wore drawn over their heads. As the night wind sighed among the trees they started and looked round, and if a few words were exchanged among them, it was under their breath.

Something was said after a while by one who might have been an artisan, and the assembly immediately composed themselves into serious attention; the speaker proceeded in fervent words, which Clementi from his lurking place could only indistinctly catch, the rest stood round and as with one voice uttered, when he concluded, a deep '*E così sia.*' Another man now gave some order, and all at once began in subdued tones to repeat a Psalm in Italian verse. '*Presso al fiume, al fiume di Babilonia*' was borne on the breeze to Count Clementi's ear. He did not recognise — perhaps he heard it for the first time — the mournful lament which the captive Jews once sang by the waters of Babylon, and which the poor Italians were now applying to themselves; but it flashed upon him that this was no political meeting, but an assembly of some who had renounced the Roman Church, and were attempting to form a worship of their own. It was so; these were men who met, at the peril of life and liberty, to pray and read the Bible in their own tongue — men who, with the errors of Romanism, cast off, alas! much that is essential, and, oppressed and persecuted, renounced by all parties alike, and waging war against all ecclesiastical authority, had in the very search for truth become 'in endless mazes lost.'

Count Clementi recalled tales which were darkly told of similar meetings elsewhere, but he had little expected to witness

one in Rome. He took note of it for possible future use, and drew nearer to hear what might come next. The Psalm concluded; several of the congregation produced Italian Bibles, and a chapter was read aloud. A new speaker prepared to address them — Clementi's eyes opened wide with amazement, and he had almost laughed aloud between surprise and amusement, as he suddenly recognised Cecchi in the congregation; the man whom he had fancied at times slightly mad, but no more a believer than himself; but whom he was only right in supposing a disbeliever in the Roman Church. Cecchi's eye lighted up with wild enthusiasm as the preacher began, taking for the foundation of his discourse, the text, 'The disciple is not above his master,' probably in allusion to something that had lately occurred among the little congregation; for, as he declaimed on troubles and persecutions, a faint sound of weeping broke from the women present. Taking a different tone as he proceeded, he warmed into rude eloquence on the subject of the lives led by the Roman clergy.

'Behold our Popes and cardinals, our canons and abbots, priests, friars, and monsignori! Christ forsook worldly glory, and they seek it; they sit in their marble palaces far from sun and wind with their proud train; they go not on foot, but in gilded coaches; and they curse, and bless not. Did John go in gilt coaches, or Paul wear purple and silver, mitre and ring, albe, cope and rochet? I think not. Was Peter an ambassador, a senator, a secretary of state? I think not, brethren. Did James fare sumptuously every day? Did he break the commandments from the first to the last, and buy absolution by taxing the people? Oh, generation of vipers! the true church mourns, like Rachel, for her children whom Herod has slain, but her Spouse is at hand; yea, He comes quickly, and His coming shall be an abyss of wrath to swallow up her persecutors. How has the rebellious city filled up the measure of her sin? Yea, and verily she shall be rewarded fourfold!'

The address now rose into a strain of mysticism intelligible only to the initiated; it lasted perhaps half an hour; the congregation stood the whole time, and dispersed separately and mutely. Something between a smile and a sneer curled Count

Clementi's lip, as he listened to the unflattered picture of the Roman hierarchy. He waited long after all was perfectly quiet, scaled the wall again, and got back into the road as he came.

'Not one of even the *mezzo ceto* there, except Cecchi,' he reflected; 'hardly a woman either — women always stand by their priests. Those men would welcome a revolution; hatred of the clergy is the moving spring with them. This is a new element, on which I had not counted. *Mona Luna*, you see strange things,' said he, taking off his hat in a sort of grave mockery to the moon, which rode high in the heavens; 'how many tales could you tell if you chose? but you are discreet, you see all, and say nothing. So my friend Cecchi is an enraged fanatic instead of a simple heretic! *Va bene* — I shall know how to have him. Low be it whispered how I have spent this evening. Ah ha! a heretic meeting under the holy noses of the Pope, the police, and all the cardinals!'

Two days later, Count Clementi learnt that the Mamiani Ministry having resigned, Count Rossi had, after much hesitation, accepted office.

A few days later Tito Campana was restored to his anxious relatives fresh from the galleys, animated with inextinguishable hatred against him whom he considered as the author of all his woes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I have lost the dream of Doing,
And that other dream of Done.
E. B. Browning.

'O liberty! Oh, lovely liberty!' sang Irene, as she entered the sitting-room, whence she had been called to consult with her milliner on a matter important even to the best singers and actresses — namely, a costume. Irene knew that her dresses must be not only appropriate to her parts, but becoming, unless she would risk her success; and, perhaps, there is nothing in her profession so trying to a sensitive mind as the necessary familiarity of the public with the personal appearance of the cantatrice and the actress. She cannot influence it as the author, or the painter may, and remain unknown the while; she must present herself before all eyes, and even challenge observation. Irene felt this keenly at times; her sensitiveness had not yet become blunted; her art was no mere trade; her crown was still fresh and budding round her head; she entered into her parts even more fully now than when she had first become a cantatrice; and her gay, mounting spirits, after a comic part, or the depression and lassitude that ensued after performing in a highly wrought and tragic one, showed how much of herself she threw into each.

Her present engagement soon terminated; it remained to be seen whether she would renew it or not. Her own wish was to do so; but Leone earnestly desired to obtain such an employment as should put them beyond any need of Irene's salary. He would fain have withdrawn her into private life. She had not yet confessed this to Madame Marriotti, whom she saw as often

as usual, but always found bent on taking her speedily to Germany. Irene felt very guilty when she visited her, and longed for Mrs. Dalzell, especially when her heart failed her, because Leone's health so slowly improved.

His recovery had been far from the speedy matter she had anticipated; though cured of his wound, the exhaustion left by illness hung wearily about him; his anxiety to rejoin his regiment but increased his feverish weakness; and added to this, was the critical position of Roman affairs, and the increasing ill news from Upper Italy.

Lombardy lay under martial law; her noblest and best were exiled or captive, and every ruler, save the true-hearted King of Sardinia, was hastening to revoke his concessions. To make matters worse, the ultra-republicans chose this moment for urging their claims louder than ever. Leone had returned only to find his own small party well-nigh crushed, as all must be which attempt to stand between two great forces; the public mind so highly excited, that the moderates were hooted as absolute traitors, and his own popularity threatened to give way. He and his little knot of friends had for years sought secretly to educate the people for liberty, should its time ever come; but their work was now scattered to the winds. He had lived to hear himself accused of being at heart Austrian — himself and others whose lives had been spent for Italy!

Leone found that men must head public opinion if they would be popular. Once try to restrain its course, and renegade will be the mildest name for the once idolized leader.

Yet when he spoke at Circolo Nota, the club which he himself had founded, he carried away his audience, for the moment at least, as usual; but the man who rose to reply to him was even more loudly applauded. Irene dreaded the name of *Circolo*, for Leone suffered severely after every exertion, and his fever perpetually returned.

He remained at Palazzo Clementi, for his old lodgings were no longer to be had; while those which Mrs. Dalzell had occupied were vacant. They had been let early in the season to an American family, who, alarmed by public events, had forfeited three months' rent rather than remain. Cecchi was personally

attached to Leone, though opposed to his politics, and made him heartily welcome. Doubly welcome was he to the padrona, who seemed to have obtained a dim inkling that her husband, usually so quiet and submissive at home, was not in secret what she had imagined, and she would privately beseech Leone to endeavor to keep Nino out of danger.

'That man!' she would say, alluding to her husband, 'he seems a lamb; he opposes me in nothing; yet if he says a thing is to be done — enough! so it must be. Rarely, truly rarely, does he do so; but when he does — I assure you, I tremble before him at such times. And of late I hardly know him; I could figure to myself, that he is indifferent to what I say because he has other things in his head. How does it appear to you? he hardly hears me, obliges me to buy all things that we require myself — unheard of! I dare not confess to my friends, that if I want a new lamp, or require this, or that, I have to buy it. What woman in my station conducts the household expenses? He is mad, it seems to me. These politics, these politics, they are nothing but a *crepacuore*, a heart-break, to us poor women!'

And Leone would reply with the jesting Italian proverb which deprecates interference between husband and wife: '*Non entre tra fuso e rocca, chi non vuol esser filato.*' (He who would not be spun off, must not come between the distaff and spindle.)

About this time Leone became acquainted with Count Rossi, whom he had hitherto only known in his public character. He entertained for him — unlike most of the Romans — a profound admiration. Perhaps the Minister had occasionally relaxed his habitual reserve, and allowed Leone a glimpse into his heart; for Leone implicitly believed in him, and regarded him with personal friendship, which was far from increasing his own popularity amid the general distrust and dislike of the ill-fated count. Whence the mistrust arose, or who plotted against him, has never yet been really known — perhaps never will be. The priests cast the sin on the liberals, the liberals fling it back to the priests. Certain it is, that to the welfare of Italy, to the hopes and views of the moderates, his continuance in office was indispensable; while it was equally fatal to the retrograde party and the ultra-liberals.

Leone had of course lost his post in the *Dateria* when he volunteered, and he did not desire to resume it. It had only too well taught him the corruptions of the Government, and thoroughly sickened him; he looked forward to obtaining honorable employment under the present rule. While waiting for health enough to undertake it, he turned to the pursuit which he would always have chosen, if a man could have lived by it in Rome — literature. He felt this interval of comparative tranquillity to be fleeting and precious, and used it diligently. The oppressive censorship barred the way no longer; authors need not fear that jealous board of ecclesiastics who were certain to expunge every striking passage, or to refuse permission to print at all. There was now no need to smuggle books secretly into the city, and conceal them in the roof, or in some nook in a wall. A bookseller even offered to publish all Leone's former poems, which had floated about so long anonymous and perilous to author and readers. This offer was a noteworthy sign of the times; but Leone, who acceded to it, could hardly review those early, hopeful effusions without a sigh. Others were to be added, which had wandered round the poet's sick-bed, or haunted him during tedious march and short halt, and now in this time of leisure found their way to paper. Irene and Vincenzo took the utmost delight in this work; it was their chief pleasure and refreshment during those restless, anxious days. A verse of one was on Irene's lips as she came in singing, 'Oh, lovely liberty!' She went up to Leone, and looked over his shoulder: 'You have not got on much this morning.'

'Assunta came.'

Assunta, Leone's married sister, visited him occasionally, but fond as she was of him, she always seemed to have an uneasy feeling that it was wrong to come, and that he was by no means a creditable connexion; and she evidently dared not invite him to her house, lest he should come in contact with her husband. Leone would have been slow to exchange the peace of Palazzo Clementi, or the society of Vincenzo and Irene, and the friends who assembled in their *salon*, for the company of his brother-in-law, who had occasionally used his influence for him in old days for Assunta's sake, but who regarded him and all liberals as

reprobate vagabonds. Irene knew that Assunta's visits were apt to be painful to Leone; his sister repeated the lessons taught her with parrot fidelity, and all her love for Leone only made her more anxious to detach him from his party. He could not argue with her, for she did but repeat what her husband had impressed upon her.

Irene sat down, with a roll of music in her hands, between Leone and Vincenzo — who was carving a lectern — and began to read it through in silence; but often she glanced at her companions, comparing the settled invalid look of Vincenzo with Leone's countenance. She was accustomed to see Vincenzo always ailing; it was an old, fixed anxiety; she felt it without thinking about it; Leone's slow recovery and fluctuations between better and worse were a new one, continually coming before her. All were occupied and silent, till Leone's pen paused; he looked up, and smiled in answer to Irene's smile, passing to her the manuscript.

'"A Patriot." I know what suggested this, Leone.'

'Let me see,' said Vincenzo, stretching out his hand.

She gave it, and he read the poem aloud, and returned it, with a sign that he also recognised its source.

'The man whom they call alternately Austrian and French!' continued Leone with enthusiasm, as he thought of Rossi. 'All Rome should have heard him speak as I did that first time I ever was in his company. "Italy and Greece," he said, "are sisters, differing in age, alike in beauty, equal in glory, both dead. When the last began to revive, could we look without anguish on the first, lying cold, inanimate, though lovely as ever?" — and then for once his noble heart spoke out — I still see his gesture, his kindling eye — he said, "Thank Heaven, we have seen the breath return to those lips, her cheek has flushed, her arm has raised itself. Women wept for joy when they heard this — I, a man, wept too."'

They were interrupted by Menica's entrance with a note for Irene. 'Is there an answer, signorina?' she asked, standing still before her.

'Yes, wait a *momentino*,' said Irene, holding it out to Leone. 'From Signor B——. Madame —— has sent to say she is too

ill to sing to-night. Really her fancies are intolerable, and such short notice! She was displeased yesterday, I saw.'

'The manager is in a difficulty,' said Leone, passing the missive to Vincenzo, who read it, and said, 'Of course he could not ask you to take a secondary part to Signora D——; but he evidently hopes you will volunteer.'

'Oh, I would take any part with Signora D——,' said Irene; 'I never can be grateful enough for having found true, firm friends in her, and Grassi, and Sarti. But for them I should think unselfishness and friendship impossible in our profession. Well, we must show Madame —— that we can do without her. She will like me less than ever, I should think!'

While she spoke she was writing a reply to the perplexed manager of the theatre, and another little note to Signora D——, with whom she was on the best of terms.

'You must make my excuses to our guests this evening,' she continued, gaily; 'if they wish to see me, they must come to the theatre. Here, Menica.'

Menica took the notes, but returned to say that the messenger had not waited.

'Oh, stupid fellow! Then you must take them, Menica, if the padrona will spare you. But what is the matter?' asked Irene, perceiving that the girl's eyes were brimful of tears; 'what is it, *poveretta?* speak!'

'*Non c'è nulla*, nothing, *signorina mia*,' sobbed out Menica, 'except that it has pleased Heaven to afflict my family, and I do not know where to turn for help. My brother — you have seen him, Signor Nota! You know what a cup of gold he is — how honest, how simple. He was in the service of a rich Russian lord, who gave him such wages! Oh, the man has gold mines in his own land, without doubt; he spent with both hands — so — I assure you,' said Menica, flinging out her own, expressively. 'He gave magnificent entertainments twice a week, and amused his guests with what Peppino calls Living Pictures — you understand! a marvel, indeed, I hear! and one represented the Holy Family, after a picture by Raffael d'Urbino; that old Capuchin with so long a beard, who came here one day, was St. Joseph, and Clelia Brocchi, the model, she who sits with the

others on the Spanish steps — she was the most Holy Virgin. It was most beautiful, I hear; but it caused a scandal; the police interfered.'

'So I should expect,' said Vincenzo.

'That was the end of this entertainment; and then the Russian had plays acted; but that was worse, for in one, was a priest in love; yes, like Cassandrino himself!' laughed Menica, as she recalled the numerous adventures of that hero of the Roman puppet shows; 'and also it is said that some of the characters had sacred names, such as Saint Simon and Saint Pierre. Doubtless it was a sin —'

'Nonsense, my girl, those are common French names!' said Leone, laughing.

'Signor, this I do not know, but I can assure you that the police admonished him severely; and he has taken offence and left Rome, and all his domestics are out of place; and where will they find employment? All foreigners are provided by this time, and we have so few this year! Alas! this Russian made many to live! and now my poor Peppino is without a situation.'

'We must try to find him another: do not cry for that, *carina!*' said Irene.

'Oh, it is not all, Signorina Irene; surely we have offended Heaven, for my mother, that poor woman, I have named her to you! since the evil times when the silkworms have failed and failed, and we could no longer gain a living in our village, she has gone into service, and I also, leaving my eldest sister with my father, and the *creature* at home — four of them; but she had not strength for a service, so she took a profession, and sewed umbrellas for Pietro Sanzi —'

'In Piazza St. Eustachio?'

'*Signor, si* — but even that has failed her; and she is so ill, so ill, that she desires to go to the hospital — imagine that, signori! I sought for a certificate from our priest to-day. No, thank you, signor! not he! not the least shadow of one; and why? Oh, that I cannot tell you, but my master looked as black as — as — King Balthasar — when he heard it, and said the true reason was, because I was the servant of a liberal. And so my mother, poor soul, must lie in that old garret without food

or nurse, because I live with Signor Cecchi. It is not just, signori — no, indeed!'

Her audience exchanged glances, which vividly expressed the same opinion.

'Give her money to get a nurse,' said Vincenzo to Irene; 'see what we can spare.'

'I will visit her to-day; she shall not want, *figlia*,' said Leone; 'why, you should have come to us at once, silly one!'

'Madonna reward you, and those you love! *signori*, *signorina mia!*' said Menica, kissing Irene's hand. 'Every one knows how kind you are. I always say, dear signorina, that, though you are not of our Church, still I know you are a good Christian, and so I always tell our priest when he questions me about you — better than those who let a poor woman starve because her daughter lives with liberals; as if I cared or could choose. One must live! and there is no other house with two young men in it where my brother would let me live,' she added, with Italian *naïveté*. 'There is not a better master than mine anywhere; no, nor mistress either, in all Rome, that is certain. I go to take these letters, signori; do you command anything else?'

'No more — thanks. Take Tevere with you.'

'Yes, signor. Come! Come along, *amoretto mio!* Come then!' and caressing the dog, Menica went away again, her tears quite banished by the sympathy she had met with.

'Petty tyranny! Without doubt Cecchi divined the truth,' said Vincenzo, and Leone made a sign of assent, but no more verbal comments passed.

Nota resumed his writing, and Irene came to look over him again; she was standing behind him watching the course of his pen, when Cecchi and Clementi entered together.

Clementi never saw Irene now without a fierce, tiger-like feeling leaping up in his heart, a resolve that very soon this game should end — she must be his at any cost, and the life that stood between them must end. The thought of this happy family party, the knowledge that she and Leone were constantly together, nearly maddened him. He greeted them all, and took up a position near Leone, saying, 'The poet at work? what now?'

'You shall see very soon; there are but a few lines more,' said Nota. 'Part of the volume is already printed.'

Clementi took up the loose proof sheets. The first he lit on tried his self-command; it was a little poem written long before, but never hitherto published; its date showed that it had been composed soon after Leone first knew Irene. '*Il Primo Amore.*' The count laid it down with a frown, and looked out of the window. In one corner a spider was spinning a delicate web, examining and strengthening each thread as it progressed. In that web Clementi saw a great deal; he made it a map wherein he pictured to himself the grand crash in which his rival must perish, his own treachery remain unknown (for his uncle might be supposed to relent and save him); the appeal to Irene to become his wife, that he might rescue Vincenzo as his brother-in-law, though he could do nothing for the mere heretic stranger who had meddled with Roman politics. There were other thoughts too; he knew that exile and confiscation of property was the penalty for marrying a heretic; but he knew also how much interest can do at Rome, and how loth the Roman Church is to drive her children to extremity.

'Do you like it? that is one of my favorites,' said Irene, and Clementi found that in his musing he had taken up another leaf, and was apparently studying it intently. It was one of the slighter poems, modelled on those graceful, innocent canti, which are chiefly composed by the peasant and the mountaineer, and float about the Apennines and along the Roman Campagna, joined to plaintive, passionate airs, which only Italians can sing as they should be sung. Leone's little poem was so congenial to the spirit of the canti, that it became popular immediately; nay, it may be heard yet in the mouths of the Roman people.

'I saw him in a dream to-night—
Brocaded was the dress he wore;
He had a sword, 'twas gold and bright,
A velvet cap and plume he bore.
With his dear smile he said to me,
"I cannot live apart from thee;
Parted I can no more remain—
I come, I leave thee not again."

And when I woke, how did I weep!
(My eyes are red you still may see,)
I prayed that I again might sleep,
That he might speak once more to me.
Would I had never oped mine eyes
Until I woke in Paradise;
There would I wake with him, and then
We two should never part again.

They tell me that I trust to lies,
But I — I know 'twas truth he said.
He looked at me with angel's eyes,
And on his heart his hand he laid;
And if he does not come — oh, then,
My angel's gone to heaven again.
Unless to heaven he has gone home,
I cannot fail — I know he'll come!'

Count Clementi smiled, and sang a verse in his rich voice, adapting it to a remarkably sweet and touching air, and Irene said, 'That shall be its air henceforward; where did you hear it?'

'In a mountain cottage where I once was driven to take shelter from the rain during a shooting excursion.'

And when Irene sang it that night, it was encored for a second time; and thenceforward *The Dream* was always sung with the air to which Count Clementi had set it.

He put it down to take the poem which Leone had just finished, and his flexile lips took their most sarcastic expression: '*The Patriot?* Ha! Count Rossi, *mi pare!* Well, poets have different eyes from other mortals. Did you see him yesterday? I heard he sent for you.'

'I did; he said he wanted some one who fairly represented the wants and aims of the middle class, but the interview was very short.'

'Interruptions, no doubt?'

'A messenger from the Quirinal; then Cardinal L—— insisted on seeing him, then a courier arrived from France, and he received a deputation from the weavers at noon; so my interview was little more than an order to be ready for another, next week.'

'Next week — ah, the Chambers will be open then. You

have heard the rumor that Rossi meditates strong measures against the heretics, who are said to hold meetings in Rome? It is reported that he has had already a very serious consultation with the Holy Father on the subject.'

Vincenzo saw that Cecchi, who had been standing talking to him, was listening intently.

'Heretics! folly! Roman heretics! where will he find them?'

'How should I know? but I can tell you it is whispered, that he has obtained some strange information. If there be such meetings, they must cloak political designs.'

'Where did you hear this?'

'It was told me in confidence,' said Clementi, who had invented the tale with a view to alarming Cecchi; 'and though you disbelieve, I know as a fact, that the prisons of the Inquisition are already being filled. You heard that strange story of a Waldense disappearing lately?'

Cecchi's lips grew compressed; Clementi now spoke truth. A member of the heretic congregation had mysteriously vanished.

'I do not believe it,' said Leone, decidedly, and they spoke of other things.

CHAPTER XXX.

Thou shalt have fame! Oh, mockery! give the reed
From storms a shelter, give the drooping vine
Something round which its tendrils may entwine;
Give the parch'd flower a raindrop, and the meed
Of love's kind words to woman!

MRS. HEMANS.

'ZENAIDE!' called Madame Marriotti in the quick imperative tones which were a sure sign that something had ruffled her; 'Zenaide! where is that large letter which I was reading in bed this morning?'

'*Non saprei dire* — I could not say, signora.'

'I had it less than an hour ago, and now I can't find it — where can it be gone?'

'*Anima mia!* who knows?'

'Be so kind as to look for it,' said Madame Marriotti, growing momentarily more excited and nervous, but preserving the almost invariable courtesy with which servants are addressed in Italy.

Zenaide made a feeble attempt to find the lost letter, by lifting a book and a handkerchief, and casting a glance around, but no letter caught her eye; and, crossing her hands on her apron, she said resignedly, 'It is lost, dear signora; it is the will of Heaven that we should not find it.'

'*Cara mia!* I tell you it must be found; it is of importance; I had —— why, here it is! how could it — ah well, it is all right now. Go and fetch my dinner. What's the matter now?'

'It is not the hour yet, signora.'

'*Benedetta te!* did I not tell you I would have my soup at noon to-day?'

'No, signora.'

'Not, *sfacciatella?* I told you so distinctly this very morning.'

'I did not hear you, signora.'

'Well, well, go along, and get it ready this instant, if you please; make haste, *via — via.* It is surprising,' said Madame Marriotti, subsiding again into her usual plaintive and reflective tone, 'it is really very surprising, that she should have the moral force of character to tell me such a falsehood, when she knows that she heard my orders, and knows that I am certain she did hear me. By the bye — Zenaide — come here for a moment; I mean to have refreshments to-night, enough for some twenty people; you must see about it; coffee, and ices, and cakes, do you understand? and you must get some man to come and wait on us.'

'Yes, signora. Raimondo Lopez is an excellent youth; you could trust him in the house.'

'True; see if he can be had.'

'I think not, signora; he serves an English milord at present.'

'What an animal this girl is! What's the use of naming him then?'

'The signora has had Sigismondo Romanis —'

'Well?'

'He waits at a *café*, but he can easily get leave of absence this evening by saying his wife is ill, or some such little lie.'

'Yes,' said Madame Marriotti, taking it as much for granted as Zenaide, that Sigismondo might and would lie if it suited him. 'See about him immediately.'

Madame Marriotti looked through her recovered letter with an anxious and thoughtful expression, called Zenaide again to know if she had taken a message to Mademoiselle Mori, rearranged the various articles which she had tossed about in her search, went to the window, and looked out.

'There she is!' said she, perceiving Irene coming along the street with her maid. 'Now then! what is she stopping for? a beggar?'

Irene had paused to speak to a woman who had vainly applied to several passers-by for relief, receiving from the foreign-

ers no reply at all; from the natives the more courteous, but scarcely more satisfactory, 'Go in peace,' or 'May Heaven help you.' Madame Marriotti, watching from her window, could see that Irene had asked a question, probably whether the woman were a widow, as her dress seemed to denote; and the answer was a shake of the head, hands clasped on the breast, and a look upwards. Irene gave her a trifle, was thanked by the touching benediction — 'The Holy Virgin and the saints bless all whom you love,' and then came quickly under the great archway, and up the staircase, leaving her bonnet and mantle with Maddalena in the anteroom, while she herself entered Madame Marriotti's *salotto*. She wore a black silk dress; her dark hair was plaited like a tiara round her head in the becoming fashion learnt from the Grecian maidens in some remote period by the peasants of South Italy; silver pins confined its coils at the back. Nausicaa herself could hardly have looked more entirely the daughter of a Greek race than Irene, whose pure oval face, soft dark eyes, and sweet and serious dignity, marked her at once as a descendant of one of those Grecian colonies planted some two thousand years ago on the shores of Italy.

Madame Marriotti looked steadfastly at the elastic, graceful figure, and the face so endowed with nobility and intellect that all mere prettiness sank into insignificance beside it — there was something solemn in the gaze, and Irene asked, 'Dear *maestra*, what has happened?'

'My child, if I asked you to do something to please me, would you do it?'

'Ah, *maestra*, ask nothing which I must refuse — it would grieve me too much.'

'Read that,' replied Madame Marriotti, putting the letter, for which she had searched, into her hands. It was an offer, through a third person, of an admirable engagement for Irene at Dresden. She watched the young *prima donna* narrowly as she read, and saw her eye kindle, her breast heave, the soft color come vividly into her cheeks — she paused, read on, looked up, and shook her head.

Madame Marriotti was not daunted; she had expected opposition and counted much on her own influence. She shut Irene's

mouth with, 'Not a word now; think it well over. We will talk about it to-night, when my people are gone. This is the turning-point in your life; you have as yet won popularity, but not fame; the world is before you now; lose the opportunity, and you will repent it as long as you live. No, I am not going to hear a word now; take the letter home with you, and consider. Vincenzo is a reasonable person — show it to him.'

'And Leone?' said Irene, with emphasis.

'Child, long ago I prophesied that that entanglement would bring you nothing but grief. You cannot marry him at present, I suppose; and, if you could, he would cause you to throw away all your opportunities for his sake.'

'He asks nothing, he is ever himself, the most generous man on earth; I stay here by my own wish.'

'That is enough now; recollect, however, you have a duty owing to your art — perhaps a little to me. Now go; I shall see you again by and by. Irene! my child —'

Irene had turned to go, but she came back at this appeal, and Madame Marriotti took both her hands, and looked up beseechingly into her face — 'You will not break my heart by refusing this? I am old, and have few to love; your success is what I care most for on earth.'

'Dearest *maestra!*' said Irene, much moved, and she stooped and kissed her old mistress, who clasped her close with a suppressed sob — then pushed her away, muttering,

'What folly — what possesses me to-day? Go away, child.'

Irene obeyed and walked home pensive. Arrived there, she found Vincenzo reading over an article just sent in for Leone's newspaper; Leone himself was talking to a friend on the threatening aspect of public affairs, and the alarming unpopularity of Rossi. Fresh news of misfortunes in Lombardy had arrived and saddened every one, and Rome was inclined to vent her wrath on the Prime Minister.

The conversation was suspended with instinctive caution as the door opened. When they perceived who was come, they changed it to less gloomy topics. When the visitor was gone, Nota exclaimed, 'I would give much to know that the civic guard was to be depended on; nothing can save Rossi, if he will

not take warning. I must see him to-night; it will be madness, if he ventures to the *Cancelleria* to-morrow. This strange rumor that he is to be assassinated cannot have sprung up without foundation. Those insane fools, who will be satisfied with nothing but their own crazy visions, are at the bottom of it all; and the priests, whose power he had diminished daily — was there ever mischief without a priest being at the bottom of it?'

'Ay, every one of his measures has been a blow to the priesthood; he has continually taken more and more power out of their hands,' said Vincenzo.

'A firm hand, a clear head, the Pope's entire confidence, all that a Minister most wants; he knows Rome, he knows more of public affairs, in short, than any man amongst us; he was destined to give Italy freedom and justice — and is this to be the end?' exclaimed Leone.

'You say he has been warned?' asked Irene, her own affairs forcibly driven out of her mind by the excitement and alarm which she caught from her companions.

'In vain! He is too proud to listen — too noble to believe in treachery; he trusts in the troops. His one chance is to be surrounded by friends as he enters the *Cancelleria* to-morrow. If I could address the people before he arrives — if I could get a hearing, I could save him,' said Leone, whose eloquence had indeed many a time calmed the populace. 'We should concert measures instantly; but the vagueness of this rumor —'

'If there be a plot, Cecchi knows of it,' said Vincenzo.

'Vincenzino! you do not think him an assassin!'

'No, Irene, not in his sober senses; but the man is strangely changed of late, and we have heard of secret societies, where men are sworn to obedience and assassins are chosen by lot.'

'Oh, it seems too dreadful!' said Irene, turning very pale.

'See him I must instantly,' said Leone, starting up, but recollecting that Cecchi was engaged in his business at this hour, he paused to reflect. 'I must trust to seeing him this evening then. I could not find Donizetti or Galilei at home either, this evening — yes, I must wait. There is just a chance of my seeing Count Rossi again; I may be able to give him one more warning.

Nothing on earth could be so fatal to us as his death — nothing so play into the hands of the *Papiste*.'

Menica entered with a dish of macaroni and another of vegetables, which formed the abstemious Italian dinner. Vincenzo had to clear away his books and writing, and the girl's presence of course put an end to the conversation. When they had sat down to dinner, Irene said, 'It is almost wrong to think of personal affairs now, but I ought to show you both this letter. Will you read it aloud, Leone?'

He did so, and a silence followed; for all were full of thought, all conscious that this was a turning-point in Irene's career; the way to fame and wealth lay open before her. She had already acquired a name, but she was yet comparatively unknown; she had only appeared on the Roman stage, which is little celebrated, and pays its cantatrices ill. To go to that land of music — Germany, to hear and see the high priests of her art, to rank, perhaps, highest of the great singers of her day — these were not slight temptations to Irene, whom nature had created a cantatrice, with as little choice in the matter as she allows to her predestined artists, poets, and men of science. Irene's whole education had been musical; she had learnt to look on music as the purest, noblest thing on earth. The painter, full of yearning after Italy and her treasures of art, feels somewhat as Irene did, when she thought of Germany. It was in her power to go there now.

On the other hand, there was love, and there was patriotism, which, perhaps, in Irene's case was nearly the same thing, since she had learnt to be patriotic from Leone Nota. With a woman patriotism is apt to become a personal feeling — an affection; it was so, in a measure, even with Irene, though her views were wide and just. Too many ardent discussions had been held in her *salon*, too many of the best and wisest patriots frequented it, for Irene's love of her country to be merely the desire that her lover should have his wishes. Irene foresaw that evil days were coming for Rome; she could not desert her birthplace. It might be long before she returned, and where would Leone be meanwhile! — and the marriage, which, were they rich or poor, was really to be in the spring!

Another weighty objection was Vincenzo. Where would not Vincenzo go if she wished it? But in Rome he had friends, was known by his carvings, was deeply concerned in public matters. Could she ask him to leave all this, and be dependent on her? Vincenzo would not have made this objection, but Irene thought of it for him. And there was another reason, stronger still. Like a distant Eden, Germany offered itself to her view, but close at hand was Nota. She met his eyes with their deep, mournful gaze — smiled, and asked, 'What do you say, Leone?'

He paused, took her hand, and answered in tones which he forced into steadiness, 'Irene, here you alone are judge.'

She looked at her brother, and there was a smile in her dark eyes, a sort of glad triumph in her countenance, as she felt that here was a sacrifice to be made for Leone's sake, and yet that, made for him, it was no sacrifice at all. Vincenzo looked at friend and sister alternately, and for once was uncertain what Irene's sentiments were; and he felt strongly for Nota, whose features betrayed by how great an effort he prevented himself from influencing her.

'Leone is right in saying that this is for you to decide, Irene.'

Nota spoke now low and calmly, and with authority, though his voice faltered as he concluded. 'Irene, I have offered you all that a man can — his love. All the rest is nothing; we may put riches and poverty out of the question. Choose between me and fame, but choose deliberately. Heaven only knows what kind of fate you will meet as my wife; there are dark days before us. There is nothing so precious to me as your happiness — you know it. Choose freely; I give you back your promise. Irene, many may call you great! to me you are dear; but remember that my happiness and your own will be lost for ever, if too late you find that you regret fame and fortune.'

Vincenzo held out his hand to his friend; his feelings were divided; the grand future offered to Irene dazzled him, but his heart went with Leone, who had not looked at Irene while he spoke; their eyes met now. 'Did you really doubt what I should choose?' she asked. 'Ah, Leone, what would fame be to me without your love? Now, every plaudit seems something to offer to you. You little know how mockingly it used to sound

to me when you were in Lombardy — all my life was empty and worthless. And now — now — you are come back. I could bear or do anything now. Choose freely? You must teach me not to love you first, Leone!'

At that moment even Vincenzo was nothing to her in comparison with Nota; they had both forgotten that there was any one in the world except each other. Vincenzo knew it, but his sigh changed into a look of almost womanly tenderness, as he watched the two dearest to him on earth.

When Irene became more composed she foresaw with dread how intense a disappointment her decision would be to Madame Marriotti. She pictured in thought the probable scene; summoned her arguments, braced herself up to meet all the surprise, grief, and anger which she knew she could encounter, talked the matter over with Vincenzo, and finally went and sat for an hour or two in the gardens on the Pincian, to have time for quiet reflection. Scenes that she had almost forgotten rose up out of her past life before her; from where she sat she could see the Bosco — rising high above the iron-grated door of the academy — she had never been there since Vincenzo's accident; the name of De Crillon came, she knew not why, into her mind, though she had not thought of it for years — could not have recalled it the day before had she wished to do so. How much, how very much, had happened since that day; how entirely were her affections, her fortunes, become bound up in Rome!

Looks of interest were cast by many of the foreigners, loitering in those pleasant gardens, on the young Italian girl, who sat so lost in thought that she never perceived their notice; while the staid Maddalena sat by her, knitting ceaselessly, her grave, dark face, long golden ear-rings, and the silver pins in her hair attracting the notice of strangers almost as much as the pensive Grecian features of her young mistress. A band was playing in one part of the garden; carriages drove up and down, or waited while their owners sauntered in the shady walks or sat to listen to the music; nurses with their bright ribbons and silver pins paraded up and down; crowds of children skipped, ran races, drove their hoops, or played at different games; the rosy, blue-eyed English or German children contrasting with the slender, dark-

eyed, sallow little Italians. The air rang with clear laughing voices.

Some little boys, near Irene, had invented a new version of the popular '*Lupo;*' one sitting on the ground, feigned to be ravenously gnawing something, and the others with great eagerness surrounded him, and entreated to be told what it was. The usual answer would have been, 'The bones of your sister,' and then ought to have followed a pantomime of threats and flattery by which the 'wolf' should be finally cajoled out of the relics, but in the present instance the game ran:

'Wolf, wolf, what are you eating there?'

'I eat the bones of an Austrian,' lisped Lupo in reply, lifting up a little mirthful face, and, instead of the outbreak of horror, came a grand clapping of hands, and a cry, 'Let us see, let us see, dear wolf, good wolf — wolf, the core of my heart!'

Lupo growled in answer to these endearments, gnawed ferociously, and replied, 'You are yellow and black Austrians yourselves.'

'No, no, no, we are patriots, we are Italians; out with the barbarians, down with their banner — show us the bones, the bones, the bones!'

Another little fellow presently took the character of Lupo, and improved the game by asserting he was eating Radetsky; and inspired by the burst of applause, he added, 'all the cardinals.'

'Cannibal!' was heard in a tone of profound disgust; and a boy of some seven or eight years, advanced into the midst of the group with dignity, and said, 'You are all miserable *Carbonari;* I am a *Papista*, and I will have you all excommunicated.'

'Oh, oh, the traitor, the priest!' shrieked all the others with veritable rage, for both they and the new comer were in thorough childish earnest.

'My papa says that Radetsky has beaten Charles Albert and your Durando into little bits; so there!' said the small champion defiantly, amid such a storm of shouts and hisses, and hands brandished as if they held sabre and dagger, that all near stopped and looked on with surprise and amusement; and the youthful *Papista* was suddenly captured and dragged away by the nurse with whom his two little sisters were demurely walking. Such a

scène was not without its significance. Irene was roused by the noise, and, looking at her watch, discovered that it was time to go home.

It was with a beating heart that she went to Madame Marriotti's house in the evening, and the affectionate look which the *maestra* gave her as she entered, caused her a fresh pang. Though many foreigners had left Rome, there were French and Germans present as well as Italians, and Madame Marriotti went from one to another, stopping to converse for a few minutes with each in their own languages, which she spoke with perfect fluency, though with a slight accent which betrayed that the rich and sonorous Spanish was her native tongue. She was, in fact, a cosmopolite — now, perhaps, more of an Italian than anything else; her chief friends were in Rome, and her beloved art found too little scope in Spain to tempt her back thither; but she retained traces of her origin in her swarthy complexion, her vivid black eyes, soft accent, and fairy-like hands and feet, and a sentence of Spanish would at all times awaken her out of her dreamiest mood. As a girl she had probably been too dark and meagre to have any claims to beauty, though at all times she must have fascinated by the bewitchingly sweet and gracious manners which she could assume when she pleased. Probably she looked better than in her full prime on this evening in her black velvet dress, with a *fazzoletto* of costly lace on her head, her fan in her hand, and a Cachemere shawl, a royal gift, draped round her. She had gathered her wits on this occasion, and instead of letting them wander in the dream-land where she was so apt to dwell that it had become far more real to her than the actual present, she gave her mind to entertaining her guests, and, after some persuasion, was induced to sing to them. She had given up singing for several years, but those who knew her age, stood amazed at the sweetness and expression with which she gave a popular *canzone*. The once magnificent voice was, indeed, almost gone, but the execution and sweetness remained, and the old lady, evidently gratified by the general admiration and thanks, consented to sing now a litany to the Virgin which she had picked up by ear from the boatmen of Sorrento; then a Russian air; next one of her native *canciones*.

Irene stood listening, and wondered if ever she should sing to a party who remembered her glory as a thing of the past, and look back on her life as something laid aside — and then she smiled, and remembered that her fate was decided; she should never wander from Rome, never be a world-famed cantatrice, but instead — ah, what a vision of a happy home rose up! As she looked at Madame Marriotti, lonely and childless, amid the recollections of past fame, she clasped her hands together in the fulness of her silent acknowledgment, that to a woman the sunshine of home, the love and protection of one stronger than herself, is the best lot that life can offer. 'Women and vines both need a prop!' she whispered to herself with a happy smile. Madame Marriotti now rose, and bade her sing with a German professional, who afterwards expressed his delight at hearing the music of his native country so perfectly rendered and appreciated by an Italian; and she had some interesting conversation with him about living German composers and the characteristics of modern music.

'You never hear my native music properly in Italy; the Italians do not love it; you are the only exception that I have met with; you might belong to us; you ought to come to Germany, mademoiselle. Why remain so long in this narrow sphere?'

Madame Marriotti was near; she looked round — Irene shook her head, and her heart beat painfully. The German, fairly launched on his hobby, proceeded, not heeding her silence. 'The indifference to our masterpieces is surprising; nothing but music that works on the passions will be listened to at Rome. Now this majestic piece by M——, madame without doubt knows it?' said he turning to Madame Marriotti, and playing a few bars on the piano to recall to her the composition he meant.

'Oh yes, I have heard M—— himself play it; or let me see, was it somebody else? Ah well, it does not signify; I know it was some celebrated man, but then there are such heaps of celebrated men; at all events it was very wonderful and dull.'

'Dull!' exclaimed the musician aghast. 'Dull! his style is colossal; it may be likened for grandeur and massiveness to a Gothic cathedral; it is infinite; how calm, how majestic, yet how human; how full of *schauerlich süsse* harmony!'

'Yes,' continued Madame Marriotti, not in the least aware of his indignant disbelief of his own ears, and pursuing her recollections in her usual erratic style; 'yes, I know I thought it heavy; he played it to give me an idea of the style of the thing. It was at that party when Sontag and Malibran first sang together.'

'Madame was so happy as to hear those two first sing together?'

'I knew both well — ah, poor Malibran, half zingara, half sibyl, and wholly enchantress! Who would have foretold her death in gloomy England who saw her that night!'

The guests pressed round, for Madame Marriotti possessed in perfection that delightful art which can only be expressed by the French word '*raconter;*' that indefinable talent which lends point and grace to the slightest anecdote. They entreated her to describe the meeting between the two great singers.

'I have told it to you fifty times,' said Madame Marriotti, with the silvery laugh which had something of childhood's unrestrained joyousness about it — 'don't try to flatter me into telling it again.'

But they would not be satisfied until she had related how the two queens of song had, up to that time, shunned a meeting, as if afraid of each other's powers; how an innocent conspiracy entrapped them into an interview and a duet, in which each sang as if inspired; and how at the end each gazed at the other as if amazed by the excellence of her rival — then by a common impulse they embraced, and were fast friends ever after.

Irene greatly enjoyed this evening, though she dreaded its close; it had refreshed her to hear the subject she loved best discussed with feeling and science, and she was glad to forget politics entirely for a time. She was weary of the miserable tidings from Upper Italy, and of the violence and egotism of the democratic party in Rome.

The guests began to go; the German was the last; he said to Irene as he took leave, 'We shall meet yet in my own land.' Irene and Madame Marriotti were left alone. The old lady sat down, held out her hands to Irene, and said, using one of the caressing phrases of her native language, 'Child of my soul! come to me. How is it to be?'

Irene came, knelt beside her, took her hands, and said, while she looked up in her face, 'Forgive me, dearest *maestra.* It cannot be!'

'And why not, my child? Let me hear,' said Madame Marriotti, with gentleness that showed how entirely her heart was set on this scheme.

'There are many reasons, *maestra.* . First, I have promised to be Leone's wife in the spring; he would hardly choose me to leave him in the summer; next, I cannot ask Vincenzo to go. He loves Rome with all his heart; you have heard him say, that he could not live elsewhere, and then, there is his profession. I could not bear him to be a mere appendage to me; and, if my voice should fail, what should we have to live on?'

'True. On the other hand Heaven has made you a cantatrice, has given you great powers; your vocation is as clearly marked out as that of any missionary or martyr. Heaven will one day say to you, "Where is the work that I gave you to do?" it says now, "Show the world what my noblest, most spiritual gift may be made; make your profession honored by your life; interpret for the great musicians whose works lie mute till one comes who can give them voice." Is this nothing? Child, I never told you your path was strewn with flowers; I warned you long ago, that hands and feet — ah, heart too, would bleed in the path you had chosen; but your choice has long been made; you must go onward, and fling away whatever hampers you in the ascent.'

Irene was mute; she felt strongly the dignity and authority with which Madame Marriotti spoke — speaking out of her own life and conscientious practice.

'You must, you must do this, Irene! What city was ever built, what work ever done, without blood and tears to water it? Mark me, I do not talk of happiness; I only say, that you must account for the great gift that Heaven has given you; cage it, or cast it from you, and it will return to be a terror and a burden; you will have no scope for your energies, no sufficient interest in life, if you throw yourself into a sphere never intended for you. "Do your work" is the command laid on us all.'

'And Leone?'

'Ah me! child, you would not listen when I warned both you

and one who was older and should have been wiser; Mrs. Dalzell is an excellent, calm Englishwoman; she knows nothing of the passion and the strife of souls filled, like a pythoness, with some great perilous gift; she would bid a tiger copy the manners of her drawing-room cat. She knows no more of the matter than one who has only seen the blue sea under the cliffs of Sorrento when it laughs in the sunshine, knows how the Atlantic thunders on the iron-bound coast of Galicia. But you, Irene, you should know the impulse which hurries us on, and masters us — don't tell me you cannot understand me.'

'I do, dearest *maestra;* I will tell you the whole truth; I was almost overcome with the wish to accept this proposal; but how can I? When every day darkens for Rome, could I leave Leone?'

'Let him find a home ready made for him in Germany, by the time he is exiled.'

'He will never leave Rome,' Irene answered, very seriously, a dark shadow falling on her face; 'free or a prisoner he stays here. His are not opinions, but convictions.'

'What can you look forward to, if you remain? an audience, fickle as the waves, will weary of you — what are you doing for your profession?'

'Improving the public taste, and our *corps dramatique;* I hope, indeed, dear *maestra,* you will not deny that the operas of this season have been better put on the stage, and sung with more truth of style and taste than they ever were before?'

'As if that were worth all the plots, and calumnies, and cabals that you have gone through this year!'

'I am not artist only, you must remember, signora. Rome is my birthplace; in her all my hopes are centred. I could not go now — leave Leone now! my heart and thoughts would be all here; and, after all, I could not be true artist without being true woman.'

'You are woman enough, silly girl. Are you throwing all away, because you are too proud to ask to be free?'

'Free! Ah, what a desolate freedom! *Maestra,* these were his words, "Many may call you great, but to me you are dear."'

'Then you throw away an opportunity that will never return, for love, as you call it?'

'I love him, signora,' said Irene, rising; 'yes, no words can tell how I love Leone Nota, or how proud I am of his love for me. All possible fame would be worthless if I did not feel that every acclamation was delicious because he felt it as his own triumph. Offer a woman fame instead of love! nay, give her the rosy apples of the Dead Sea at once!'

Madame Marriotti sat listening with a melancholy, abstracted expression. 'So you refuse?' she said.

'Yes,' said Irene, decidedly; but a rush of remorse for the disappointment she was inflicting came over her, and kneeling down again she caught her friend's hand, and exclaimed, 'Oh, forgive me! how can I help it?'

'You really refuse? you have decided?' said Madame Marriotti; and then after a long silence, she added in a low murmur, unconscious that she spoke aloud, 'So it ends thus — it ends thus! well, try the experiment, then; you may be right; I had all the glory once that woman could have, and I sit lonely here now. I shall die alone, unless Zenaide has courage to stay till the last. I had a selfish motive in this scheme, no doubt; I thought to be remembered a little longer through my pupil. "*Le monde usé n'a plus rien qui me touche;*" some one said that who knew life well — it's a desolate thing after all, this life; but it ends, it ends; nothing lasts, neither joy nor sorrow. I did not think once to grow old without husband or child, with nothing but memory left to me. Do as you will, Irene.'

'Dear, dear *maestra!*' exclaimed Irene, amid fast-falling tears, while she clasped and kissed the withered hand that lay passive in hers.

'I don't urge you any more, child; I have no claim on you or on any one. There's not much to take me anywhere, but I think I shall go to Dresden; I have one old friend there, and Rome is no place for quiet people now.'

'To Dresden! not really! you will not undertake such a journey alone?'

'Oh, Zenaide will go, I dare say, and I have nothing to keep me here. Your carriage must be waiting, my dear; it is late. Good night.'

'Say you forgive me all this pain, signora.'

'Yes, I forgive, if there be anything to forgive. Good night.'

Irene clung round her and kissed her, and the kiss was returned, but she felt tears on the old lady's cheek, and was half broken-hearted herself at having caused her such mortification. She could not rouse her from the depression into which she had fallen, and noticed with great pain how feebly she rose from her chair, and how ill she looked — most unfit certainly for a journey to Dresden. Irene could not have retracted; even in the midst of her trouble her heart bounded at the thought that she had made her fate one with Leone's; but she would have almost given even her voice, to be able to console Madame Marriotti, and be assured that this plan of setting off to Germany would vanish into air.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Calphurnia. — What mean you, Cæsar? Think you to walk forth?
You shall not stir out of your house to-day.
Cæsar. — Cæsar shall forth. The things that threatened me
Ne'er looked but on my back; when they shall see
The face of Cæsar, they are vanished.

Julius Cæsar.

Gemma had good reason to suppose that Clementi had had some news of Luigi Ravelli, of whom she only knew that he had joined the gallant little band with which Garibaldi was keeping up a guerilla warfare against the Austrians. She was quite sure that her brother would offer her nothing without an equivalent; and, as she had no tidings to offer him, she had little chance of buying the intelligence she wanted. It struck her that Vincenzo might also have had a letter; and she was about to slip away, when her mother observed the movement, and interfered. 'Where are you going? Stay here.'

'I want to see Irene Mori.'

'At this time in the evening! Nonsense, you are too intimate with her; you forget that she is a heretic and a cantatrice. Your brother is always urging me to make her acquaintance, but I tell him I don't mean to do so; I have not done it all these years, and why should I now? I may let lodgings to this sort of people, but as for knowing them — *giusto!*' said the contessa, with a characteristic mixture of reserve and pride.

'If you will permit me to make an observation, mamma; you allowed the American lady from the first floor to visit you.'

'*Altro!* a woman who pays such a rent! would you have me affront her? I do not mean to see any more of her, however; you can tell Filippo to take my card to her rooms to-morrow

after she is gone out. She is sure to go somewhere; these foreigners are never still; they come and spy into everything, and admire with open mouths, as if it were any business of theirs. Rome is ours after all; they do not enter into the matter, the impertinents! They spend their money amongst us, therefore the Holy Father tolerates them. Where is Pietrucchio? it is time to repeat the rosary.'

He entered while she spoke, kissed her hand affectionately, and asked if she felt better. The querulous voice softened, and the fretful brow was smoothed immediately. '*Benino*, pretty well, *non c'è male*, Pietrucchio. Are you going out again to-night?'

'Let me go and see Irene — *she* objects,' whispered Gemma, with a glance at her mother. He nodded, and, the evening prayers having been recited by the family, he bade Gemma, significantly, good night, and occupied his mother with an account of his evening, which had been spent with a friend. He would have sacrificed anything to forward his plans, even laying aside for this object the almost Turkish jealousy with which women, especially unmarried women, are watched in Rome, which, however, does not prevent the existence of a very dark side to Italian life, conventual as well as secular; but scandal in the former case is hushed by authority, and the matter is, if possible, '*coperta*.'

Gemma ran to Irene's rooms; the outer door, much to her surprise, chanced to have been left ajar; no one was in the sitting-room; she held up the lamp which she had taken out of the passage, but it illumined only vacancy, and she perceived with disappointment that Irene could not be at home. In fact she was at Madame Marriotti's, and Vincenzo had retired to bed. Leone was not to be seen, but a sound of vehement, though low voices, attracted Gemma's attention. It came from the Cecchi's sitting-room, which was divided from that of the Mori by a thin partition and a cupboard. Against this she leant and listened to Cecchi and Nota in fierce argument. She caught only detached words, 'Rossi — *Cancelleria* — accursed murder —' Then came a pause, while she listened in breathless curiosity. Nota spoke again emphatically but very low; there was no answer at all.

Cecchi seemed to have entrenched himself in dogged silence; then a movement followed as if Nota had left the room, and he entered the one where she was, so hastily, that she had only time to rush behind the curtain which hung over the door leading to Irene's bedroom. The idea crossed her mind that he meant to remain until Irene came home — a most unpleasant notion. He made a step towards Vincenzo's room, checked himself, caught paper and pen towards him, and wrote a few lines at speed, half standing, half leaning over the table, as if time were wanting to sit down, folded and threw down his note, wrote Irene's name upon it, and went out; and Gemma issued from her hiding-place, exultant at her release and at the discoveries which she hoped to make. She heard the house door close — he was really gone, and his mind must be very much pre-occupied, for he never noticed the lamp which Gemma had left on the table when she fled behind the curtain. She softly opened the note; it contained a very few words, bidding Irene not expect him till she saw him; he was gone to Palazzo B——. Gemma could not supply the remainder of the name, but she took it for granted that her brother could. 'Ah! I can buy Luigi's letter now! And I owe you some return for that speech in Villa Borghese, Mademoiselle Mori!' She crept out into the passage; all was still; opened the outer door, and darted home. Her brother was waiting for her, and admitted her. 'Well, what took you over there to-night?' he asked.

'A good reason. Would you like to know what Cecchi and Nota were saying?'

His eyes sparkled, and he made a quick movement.

'News for news, Pietrucchio.'

He took out the letter she wanted, but did not give it till she had repeated the fragments of conversation, and the contents of the note. He was at no loss to supply the name of the palace — Rossi's abode. She snatched the letter, and sprang away to her own room with it, while he stood thinking, and he let her take it; she had earned it. Nota's probable plan of operations quickly occurred to him; he must have obtained information of the intended assassination, and have sought to learn more from Cecchi, whose known principles made him almost certainly an accom-

plice. Doubtless he had argued with him in vain; Clementi had means of exasperating all the ultra men, as being both aware of their plans and able secretly to direct the police; and he had taken care to irritate and alarm them of late to the utmost. Nota's next step would be to warn Rossi; Clementi did not fear the result of that.

'But he may appear before Rossi at the *Cancelleria* to-morrow — he will harangue the people. Confusion! That may ruin all if he should gain a hearing — this must be looked to.'

And Count Clementi issued forth, and did not return till a very late hour.

When Irene came home she was admitted by Menica, who began, '*Ahi*, signorina! have you heard ——' but the words were taken out of her mouth by Madama Cecchi, advancing out of her own domains, her blue eyes flashing light, and an angry pink spot on each cheek, as erect and stately she marched forward. Her dress was disordered, her hair falling loose. 'Up at this hour!' cried Irene, '*ma cosa avete?* what is it?'

'It is — it is — a — a — ah, the *uominaccio*, the *birbone*,' burst out Madama Cecchi, her words hampered by her seething indignation; 'that Rossi! *mi fa una rabbia*, I am desperate, I could murder him with my hands! Imagine, the old days are returned! a search, a *sbirro* here, searching my husband's person, turning over everything — it is enough to distract all the saints.'

'Yes, signorina,' interposed Menica, 'after you were gone there comes a ring; we are at supper, we naturally do not hurry ourselves — again, furious! I open, and a police officer enters, demanding how we dare keep him waiting, and must see all books and papers ——'

'And my husband,' broke in the padrona again, 'my husband sits there glaring like a wild beast, and I ready to faint — what did I know they might not find? and distraught lest Nino should act in some ruinous way. I ask why they come here, and that *scelerato* of an officer replies, that they have had orders to examine certain houses, and inquires where Nino was yesterday, and yesterday week, every hour of the day, and Nino hissed out some answer to each question, I know not what. This *maladetto* Rossi has devised some new scheme. My husband asks politely

if all this is under Count Rossi's orders (I shiver, when I see that look in his eye, and hear him speak so smoothly); he gets a grimace for answer, as if the *sbirro* were an ape; then out must come papers and books, all must be explained, and, ah, heavens, what ill luck, and yet how comic it was! you remember the book that Leone bought at a stall in Piazza Navona?'

'And the portrait, so like Gregorio XVI. that it was a marvel!' added Menica.

'Well,' once more interrupted Madama Cecchi, 'that *stravagante*, that young madman Ravelli must needs put a beard to it one day when he was here, before the volunteers went — it was bearded like an owl, as hairy as a thistle. I never beheld Nino laugh as he did that day! and my young gentleman writes under it, "Mauro Cappelari, General of the Carbonari."'

'*Si ricorda*, signorina, Gregorio was a Cappellari.'

'Yes, yes,' said Irene, 'go on; where were Vincenzo and Leone?'

'Oh, Menica called them, but that *sfacciatello*, brass-faced *sbirro*, said he had nothing to do with them. Well, this unlucky book is in my sitting-room — out comes the picture, torn in half. Leone declared it was his property and the blame too; all in vain, to him the *sbirro* was courtesy itself. So it goes on for two hours, then half my husband's papers are carried off, and he, who sat mute all the time, except when an answer was dragged from him (and I had to push him and implore him in his ear before he would speak), then at last the fire breaks out, and he is *matto perfetto;* blasphemed like a Lutheran, and walked up and down the room swift as thought. Doubtless this traitor of a Rossi intends to bring back the time when without permission of the police, we could not have more than nine people to dinner, when, if we gave a ball, the *sbirri* must be present! *Vi pare!* I am like a maniac when I think of it.'

'Where is Leone? What can this mean?'

'Eh! who can say? Traitor of a Rossi with his French heart! and that Pio Nono of ours — *chi!*'

'I hope nothing dangerous was found!' said Irene, with new alarm.

'He says not, Nino tells me not; he has gone out I know not

where. I was so ill with alarm, that I had to lie down in my room; but I could not sleep, such things will not let one sleep.'

'Vincenzo is in his bed long ago, I hope. Where is Leone, did you say?'

'I know nothing; I heard voices below, as I lay on my bed — his and Nino's, it seemed to me; but I have a mill in my head,' said Madama Cecchi, clapping her hands over her ears; 'feel my hands, I tremble still, I am as cold as a cat's nose.'

'And I too!' chimed in Menica; 'a knife went through me when I saw that harpy of a *sbirro* with his ugly face at our door; he pushed me aside, thus, and came in while I was too frightened to stir.'

Irene felt perfectly bewildered, so much had happened this day.

'She looks quite weary, the poor darling,' said Madama Cecchi, who began to have leisure to perceive Irene's tired aspect; 'she has been singing like Santa Cecilia all the evening at the little Moorish lady's, and here we keep her still. Excuse, my dearest signorina: in these cases one is ever egotistical, one has eyes only for one's own troubles. I heard your carriage, and hurried down to make you know what had happened. If I could but guess where Nino is! But good night, sleep, and do not dream. As for me!' — and sighing deeply, Madama Cecchi retired, ejaculating once more: '*Maladetti sieno tutti i tiranni!*' and Menica followed, murmuring the comment so often made deep and low in Rome, 'But what would you have! we are under the priests.'

They little thought in what peril was Leone. After hastening to Palazzo Buoncorsi, where he did not find Rossi, he sought several friends to warn them of the dark menaces he had heard, and then bent his steps homewards by a narrow, desolate by-street. In that street was a mean, inconspicuous house, belonging to a weaver. The police probably knew something about it, but they never interfered with the meetings which, during the last year, had been held by night within it. There assembled the handful of men who guided the revolution, unseen, but influencing the fate of all Rome, and, with her, of all Italy. Here they concerted their plans, received deputies from their own

party in other States, and assigned to each man his post and his work; men of various ranks, one a *Sanpietrino*, or workman at St. Peter's; another a man of highest rank; their plans were various, but their aim the same; one and all were resolved on a republic. One made patriotism a pretext for gratifying private enmities, another, like Cecchi, might have a still deeper object than mere change of an oppressive government; but they worked steadily together, regardless of life or death when aught came in their way. Rossi was that obstacle now, and they could have told whence sprang that fatal popular belief, that he had betrayed Pio Nono; a belief which the priesthood, equally jealous of him, encouraged rather than checked.

Leone Nota suspected the existence of this conspirators' den; but he little imagined himself near it, as he walked slowly homewards, thinking of the appeal which he should make to the people next day, and refusing to believe the fear which suggested to him that eloquence may rouse but rarely restrain the masses. He suddenly became aware that he was being closely followed by two men, who had drawn nearer and nearer, and even as the conviction occurred to him they sprang upon him. He was unarmed, but with a soldier's quick eye and presence of mind, he stepped back against the wall, and flinging his cloak round one arm as a shield, defended himself by lightning-like blows with his clenched right hand. It was an unequal contest indeed, but a new comer appeared in the street, recognised his voice as he shouted to him for help, and was instantly by his side. It was Cecchi. The combat ceased an instant, but the assailants were evidently known to Cecchi, who exchanged rapid, low, astonished sentences with them; then he turned to Leone. 'I cannot help you here, Nota; no harm is intended to your life, but these men have orders to arrest you, unless you will give your word of honor to make no more attempts to see Rossi, nor to appeal to the people to-morrow. Don't refuse rashly; what can you do in this place? and I tell you honestly there are those within call who will side against you. There are some who would gladly know you safely out of the way.'

'What if I refuse?'

'You are wasting precious time,' said Cecchi, low and ur-

gently; a refusal leads straight to a prison. Are prisons so easy to get out of here? Hear me, stormy times are coming — Irene may want a protector — you can help Rossi not one whit now.'

Leone knew himself overmatched.

'You require my promise that I will not harangue the people to-morrow?'

'That you will not seek to assist Rossi directly or indirectly. I will answer for it,' said Cecchi to the men, who eagerly interposed words which Leone could not hear.

There was nothing to be done; he saw that Cecchi was straining his influence to obtain permission that he should go free. He gave the promise with a proud pang at his heart, and was allowed to go.

Cecchi's orders counteracted those of Clementi, but he did not guess that the count had a much deeper end in view than merely detaining Leone for a day. Cecchi said truly that Roman prisons hold their captives fast.

It was too late to return to Palazzo Clementi; in these unquiet times the great gate was always locked at night, and Leone preferred seeking a friend's house to rousing the sleeping porter. His note had told Irene not to expect him.

Feverish and heart-sick with her own affairs and those of others, she lay long awake, listening and starting at every sound, at last scarcely able to restrain herself from rising and seeking Vincenzo, but always checked by her fear of disturbing him. He was invalid enough to suffer severely from a wakeful night. She saw the stars grow dim before the flush of amber which stole up the sky and heralded the dawn, and the little white clouds float like spirits in the blue sky — the day had begun, the 15th of November. Slumber came, however, unquiet and troubled, and broken soon by the entrance of Madama Cecchi, her face as white as her floating dressing-gown.

'Excuse, signorina,' she said in hurried accents, glancing rapidly round, 'I must speak to you, I have a secret to tell you that our life depends on; I cannot keep it to myself; remember it is a secret that I would not tell any one else, no not my confessor on my death-bed, Heaven forgive me! — Nino came home late, very late; he was sullen, and said little, but — listen! — he

dreamed! — he spoke in his sleep — and I fear — I fear — how shall I say it? Is there no means to keep Rossi from the *Cancelleria* to-day? He must not go! I know not what they intend; I must tell you, I dare not have the sin on my soul — perhaps I might be led to tell it in confession, and the Holy Virgin only knows what would come of that; if he goes, he will never come back alive — *capite?*'

'Yes,' said Irene, aghast. 'But no, Cecchi an assassin! Romans guilty of such a deliberate crime! I will not believe it.'

'It is as true as the creed! I dare not repeat to you what Nino said last night. Oh, we have suffered already so much; has he not been *ammonito?* Does he not now obtain employment merely under the rose? and that he should plunge again into conspiracy! I would warn Rossi myself if I could go out.'

But Irene's horror was for the crime, while Madama Cecchi feared chiefly for her husband.

'Leone; where is he?'

'He is not in his room . . . . who knows if he has been able to see the count? Rossi is a traitor — but this is too dreadful; what will be the consequences!'

'The consequences!' repeated Irene. A few minutes saw her dressed and by her brother's bedside, asking, in quick imperative tones, 'Vincenzo, what were Leone's plans last night?'

'What has happened? Where is he?' exclaimed Vincenzo, greatly startled by her look and sudden entrance.

'Where is Leone?' she repeated.

'I left him sitting up, waiting for Cecchi.'

Irene shuddered, and said, in tremulous tones, 'If I did but know whether he had seen Rossi — where he is; Vincenzo, you must ask me no questions, but I have learned something of the plot against Rossi. They mean to stab him in the *Cancelleria.* There seems but one thing left to do, to warn him myself!'

'You, Irene!'

'I must try — I know this thing; I should feel like an accomplice if I let it be done without one effort to save him — Heaven will desert our cause, if this crime is done. Don't object, Vincenzo; I will — I must.'

'Stay, I must know what you are going to do. Irene! come back. I will not interfere, if there is a shadow of hope that you can do anything. Be calm, what can you do in such agitation?'

She stood still, that he might see that she had self-command enough to be trusted.

'I would put Maddalena's shawl over my head, and go to Palazzo Buoncorsi, waiting there till he came down to his carriage; he would stop, when he saw a woman waiting to speak to him.'

'And if any one should recognise you, alone, in the streets; it is madness!'

'We cannot help it, Vincenzo; we must risk it. *Could* we sit idle here, and let this thing be done?'

'You must go. Oh, to be able to go myself — I am more helpless than a woman!' said Vincenzo, with keen mortification; 'I must let you run this risk, while I — yes, go, but it will be in vain. Brave, high-hearted Rossi! you will never turn back one step through fear. The dogs, to act such an execrable part; once do this thing, and Rome is lost — all our work undone, perhaps for centuries.'

Irene had found Madama Cecchi waiting breathlessly to hear what had been resolved on; she was horrified when she heard that Irene was going out alone. Even in this conjuncture, she was meek as a lamb before the laws of custom. But this was no errand to share even with the trustworthy Maddalena; Irene was deaf to all remonstrance, wrapped herself in a large shawl which concealed her effectually, and glided into the street. Had her nerves been less highly strung, she would have felt alarmed at her strange position, and dreaded remark or recognition; but, as it was, her whole thought was to reach Palazzo Buoncorsi ere the Minister should leave it.

An old woman sat crouching with her *scaldino* at the entrance; Irene asked anxiously, if the count were yet gone. 'Not yet,' was the answer; and there was something so sinister in look and voice, that it made Irene thrill all over, and demand if she were waiting to speak to him.

'*Eh, figlia!* of what are you thinking?' was the reply in a dialect which marked her as a dweller among the Monti; 'a

poor woman like me have anything to do with a great Minister! He knows nothing of us poor folks, unless he sends us to prison.'

'No one need fear injustice from Count Rossi,' said Irene, looking anxiously at her; sure that this old hag had a personal grudge against the count. And so she had; she was Michaela Campana, the mother of that Tito whom Rossi had had sent to the galleys for an attempt to stab his valet in a quarrel.

'There is his excellency's carriage,' said the crone; '*accidente!*' she added lower, but from her very soul, and the imprecation meant, 'May you die suddenly, unconfessed!'

Irene went rapidly to the foot of the great staircase and waited. Several servants were standing about, and asked what she wanted. 'Excuse me, I have something to say to your master,' she answered, and voice and manner must have betrayed that she was of higher rank than her dress denoted; for, with a look of curiosity, the man replied, '*Perdoni, signora,*' and molested her no more. Now a step sounded above — Rossi came down the staircase, calm, noble, impassive as usual, lifted his hat to Irene, who had gone up a step or two, and would have passed on, but she made an eager movement towards him. 'Count Rossi,' she said, low but very distinctly, 'do not go to the *Cancelleria.* Nay, hear me — you are an Italian, *Italianissimo,* you should know our proverb, "The vengeance of a priest endures to the seventh generation!" They hate you; you have enemies among the people — if you go to the *Cancelleria,* you leave it a dead man.'

'The people know me,' he replied calmly, scrutinizing his companion narrowly, and more occupied with speculating on who she was, than with her urgent warning.

'They have been misled — blinded; besides, you have personal enemies — how many deadly foes may a Minister make unconsciously! Do you know why the old woman at your gate muttered "*Accidente!*" when she saw your carriage? Count Rossi, is mine the first warning you have had?'

He smiled coldly and proudly. 'No, signora, and I thank you, and all my well-wishers. Permit me to pass; the Pope expects me.'

'He would be the first to implore you to beware, did he know half — his safety, that of all Rome, depends on you. Count, I

am one of the people myself, I know the general feeling — I beseech of you do not go.'

A faint and gentle smile now came on the lips of the Minister. 'Are you indeed one of the people, signora? However that may be, I thank you again, but no man shall say that fear ever influenced Rossi. The cause of the Pope is the cause of Heaven. Farewell, kind friend.'

He got into his carriage, and it rolled away to the Quirinal, where he saw the Pope ere he proceeded to the *Cancelleria.* Irene stood watching it with clasped hands, then she went into the nearest church, and offered up agonized prayers for him, for Leone, and for Rome. Her cheeks were still bathed in tears when she reached Palazzo Clementi unobserved.

There were knots of people talking of public affairs in the streets, but no sign of general excitement. In the *loggia* of her own floor she saw Leone, leaning on its low wall, immovable. Her impulse was to spring to his side, but she stopped, reading at once in his countenance and attitude what that night had been to him. She had seen him in many moods — when his brow was lighted, and his eye glanced with the inspiration of the *improvvisatore;* she had seen him in earnest thought musing on the present and the future, on his fellow workers and principles, on a great cause and on the enormous obstacles in its way; she had seen him too when harassed with anxiety, or calmly resolute in the teeth of lowering danger; but when had she seen him look as he did now? with that stern, hopeless aspect, that brow dark with wrath and grief, that attitude so listless, so expressive in its dejection! There was nothing to be done, all hope was indeed gone, or Leone would not wear that look, would not linger here inactive. There was no need for words; she knew that, like herself, he had failed, and looked on this day as dealing a death-blow to the hopes of Rome.

She stole to his side, and laid her hand on his arm. He turned quickly. 'Irene! you here! alone?'

'I have been to Palazzo Buoncorsini.'

'Ah! you saw him?'

'All in vain. And you?'

'Failed — utterly, entirely failed — should I otherwise be here?'

'But last night?'

'Ask me nothing: I am pledged to secrecy. But you, alone! What induced you ——'

'I too have a secret to keep,' she answered, smiling sadly; 'there is very little I can tell you. But come in, Vincenzo must be anxious.'

Madama Cecchi admitted them; her eyes questioned Irene, whose shake of the head replied plainly enough. They entered the sitting-room; Vincenzo drew a long breath of relief on seeing Irene; a question was on his lips, but it was arrested by a long cry in the streets, a sound of many feet — windows were flung open in all the houses, and voices called to know what had happened. But Leone, Vincenzo, and Irene did not stir, they looked mutely at one another; and even through their closed windows pierced the horror-stricken cry, 'Rossi is dead — they have stabbed Count Rossi!'

It was so indeed. The lifeblood of the truehearted patriot stained the marble steps of the *Cancelleria*, and Rome's best hopes lay murdered with him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

There hath been in Rome strange insurrection; the people against the senators, Patricians and nobles.

Coriolanus.

In every house in Rome there was dismay, alarm, or guilty joy on that fatal day; but, from the strange tolerance of assassination which exists in Italy, there was, perhaps, less horror of the crime than fear of what would come next. The crowd poured out of the *Cancelleria*, bearing the terrible news with them. Cecchi entered his dwelling with haggard, yet exulting looks; in which horror and triumph were strangely mingled. 'The tyrant is dead!' said he to his wife, who rushed out upon him, gasping, 'Is it true? Husband! not by your hand?'

'No,' he said, putting her briefly and sternly away, and passing on; while she sank down upon the sofa in her sitting-room, choking with the hysterical sobs pent in till now by suspense and terror. So Irene found her, and with great difficulty calmed her, listening to her broken exclamations, and making such answers as she could, while thoroughly dispirited and sick at heart. Cecchi presently came in, and seeing his wife's state, addressed her with kindness, and approached to take her hand. She grasped his, and her sobs returned, uncontrollably, as she saw the horror with which Irene shrank from him. 'He did not do it, he is innocent; tell her so, husband! I am a fool to weep in this way! I never believed that you had done it! Signorina, believe him!'

Irene stood aloof from him, and looked at him with her serious eyes.

'I cannot take your hand,' she said, drawing back indignantly as he held out his own; 'there is blood upon it!'

He started and looked at it with a momentary horror, as if he thought to see the stain there.

'He did not do it, I tell you; he assures me so, signorina!' cried the wife.

'He knew that it was to be done.'

'What if I did!' replied Cecchi, impetuously, disregarding his wife's deperate attempts to silence him; 'Rossi was fated to die, but not by my hand. Your woman's judgment holds no death lawful save that which a venal judge and court have decreed. I hold that he who rids his country of a tyrant has done a noble deed, and that the blood on his hand purifies it. Rossi threw himself on his fate; he was warned, warned, warned, many times — you know it! but no man can escape his destiny. He died a traitor's death — as he deserved.'

'The traitors are those who murdered him! Oh, be satisfied; you have your will; you have cast down in him the last barrier between us and revolution.'

'And my Italy, for the first time for centuries, is free!' exclaimed Cecchi; 'free to enter on her glorious future, unfettered by tyrants, trampled on no longer by a corrupt priesthood and a false Church. The way is open before us; the day is at hand. I see the fire kindled to consume, and the sword unsheathed to sever. Thine elect, thine elect, shall be known at last!'

So wild and exulting was his look and tone that Irene doubted whether insanity had not seized him; and his wife grasped his hands with all her might. 'Are you a lunatic, husband? what are you saying? For pity's sake be reasonable — you are only fit to be sent to the mad hospital.'

'Look here,' he said to Irene, regardless of his wife's terror, 'you and your party thought that a few concessions, a soft speech or two, a shadow reform was all we wanted. Do you suppose that a handful of dry bones would satisfy a starving lion? We have been starved, and caged, and beaten; and, now that we have broken loose, do you ask us to return to the cage, and fawn on our keeper? Let him beware that he be not rent in pieces.'

'I hear,' Irene answered, struck in spite of herself by the energetic conviction with which he spoke — 'I know what Rome has suffered — all the tyranny and grinding misery of past years;

but I believe, as you do not, that all would have been well had we but had the courage to wait. Now — oh, who has cause to lament this deed as we, who see in it the ruin of all our hopes, and a sin which calls down Heaven's vengeance on our cause! The *Papiste* will point to it as the result of liberal opinions; and we, who abhor it, shall be confounded with you in men's eyes.'

'A woman's judgment! If Rome is to be regenerated, it must be amid tears and blood,' returned Cecchi, who had attempted repeatedly to interrupt her. 'Our time is come. What! shall we hold back, because human weakness makes us shrink from shedding blood, though the spirit cries to us to hold not back? Have I not fought and striven, even as did Paul? Did I not shrink back, when visions of the night bade me do this thing, and a horror of great darkness was upon me? My traitorous heart, my cowardly spirit! How often have they turned against me, telling me that I should stand alone upon the earth, renounced by all men, deserted by my own people, marked out as the shedder of my brother's blood. Has life been smooth and sweet to me of late? And I was unworthy, I smote feebly, like the weak Israelitish king, and the lot was taken from me and given to another.'

'Signorina, go away, if you love me; he is not himself, he does not know what he says — forget all this, I beseech you. Nino, Nino, if not for your sake, for mine!'

Her voice of anguish recalled him to something like self-command. He was silent, and looked down upon her with a sigh. He loved her dearly; but if even she had been an obstacle in the path which he had chosen, he would have swept her instantly away. Irene kissed her, and turned to go. The movement recalled a thought to Cecchi; he asked quickly, 'Is Nota safe?'

She turned abruptly. A conviction flashed upon her, that he had protected Nota during some danger, and she exclaimed, 'Were you with him last night?'

Cecchi's face wore an indefinable expression, which convinced her that she had guessed right; but she felt stifled in his presence, and went hastily, without asking another question. She breathed with difficulty as she recalled the wild fanaticism which

had been poured into her ears. If she believed that a touch of insanity colored it, perhaps she was not far wrong, and what was more likely than that one who had brooded over his wrongs for years, should take the promptings of a mind naturally mystic and exalted, for inspiration? The mental strife which he had undergone since the impulse to murder Rossi had taken possession of him, had further unsettled it. He said truly that 'his own people,' the little Protestant congregation, would renounce a murderer. Their doctrines, though wild and vague, taught peace and submission; Cecchi would have found no supporters amongst them.

Leone hastened to the Quirinal early on the following day, namely the 16th. He obtained admittance, for he knew more than one of the few who rallied round the Pope in that hour of danger. He brought bolder counsels than had yet been heard in the panic-stricken assembly; urged instant, stringent measures, and advised leaving the Quirinal for the Vatican, with its private passage to strong St. Angelo. One or two caught at these suggestions, but most were utterly helpless and dismayed, sunk in a kind of pious fatalism; and they baffled and paralysed their braver companions. Sighs, accents of despair, incoherent protests, and hurried movements, filled the palace; and the Pope showed the mild and passive courage of an ecclesiastic, without a spark of the decision befitting a temporal prince. So, in wavering, in terror, in contradictory advice, and orders unheeded, passed that day in the Quirinal. Outside, the agitators were at work; the assassins had laid their schemes deeply; the *Circoli* were thronged, a report was diligently circulated that the Pope had invited his subjects to come and lay their grievances before him; the morrow dawned dark with ominous forebodings. Rome was stupefied; a few frantic republicans rejoiced loudly and publicly; but, for the most part, a sullen gloom pervaded the whole city, all hearts sinking with terror, or looking forward with sinister exultation.

Leone did not return home till late in the evening. He brought the first distinct intelligence to Palazzo Clementi, which had been full of uncertain rumors all day long. It was one of Irene's reception evenings; but, instead of a crowd, only a few

anxious faces appeared. Leone was surrounded as soon as he entered, and pressed with questions: The Pope? the new Ministry? what had been done? what had really passed? One of those present had been up to Monte Cavallo, and seen the angry crowd about the palace, a cannon dragged up and pointed against it. Leone confirmed this, and told that now all was still, except that little groups of men and women came to gaze at the half-burnt gates, the marks of bullets on the walls —

'All would have been well,' Leone exclaimed, 'had decisive measures been taken at once, but everything was against us. One said this, another that; the Pope listened to all in turn. One man said, "Let us submit, it will be sooner over." Monsignore M—— absolutely told the Pope, in my hearing, that he held Rossi's death as a public blessing. Calderari was summoned, and ordered to arrest certain whose names you may guess; he shuffled, hesitated, and at last went away, and not only made common cause with those very men, but exhorted the Carabineers to do the same.'

'Confound that traitor! he never was a liberal, thank Heaven! Gregory's darling; the pet of the *Papiste!*' muttered the liberals who stood around.

Leone went on to narrate the events of the day; the march of the insurgents, gathering strength as they advanced from Piazza del Popolo upon the palace, where the Swiss closed the gates in their faces, and bravely resisted — the fatal order to fire on a throng who might easily have been calmed — an order given, it was said, by Monsignore Palma. He expiated the error by his death. The fire was furiously returned from the roofs and campaniles; helpless dismay prevailed within the palace, and treachery both within and without. The Pope at last submitted, with the sad protest that he yielded to violence alone, a prisoner in his palace. He deputed Cardinal Soglia to construct a new Ministry in combination with the chief republicans; and, as soon as this was known, amid vivas, cheers, and muskets fired in the air, the insurgents accepted his concessions, and slowly dispersed. It was a strange end to a frenzied day which decided the fate of Rome.

And was no voice raised in protest? none to disclaim these

deeds? Here and there one was heard; but there was a strange palsy of terror abroad. At Bologna, however, and in some other places, a cry of wrath and grief was raised, which showed that the stain of Rossi's murder fell but on a small portion of the Italian people.

Day by day disorder increased in the city and terror in the Quirinal, before whose doors the children played and shouted, 'Down with the Pope and the Cardinals!' The broken windows, the charred gates, the marks of shot, told a strange, sad tale; and now, had the Pope had courage to take strong measures, the time for them was past. He was a prisoner; the faithful Swiss guard had been disarmed; no one was admitted into the Quirinal without giving his name to the officer on guard, and the moderates above all were suspected and denied access.

Once before had Pio Nono fled from his diocese when a simple Bishop; he again adopted the same course. All the world knows how, on the 25th of November, he fled in disguise from his capital, to return no more, until a road was forced open for him by foreign bayonets.

The secret of his plans was profoundly kept. That he was gone was not so much as guessed by his people, until a proclamation, which he had caused to be printed and put up in the streets, announced to the amazed Romans that the Pontiff had fled.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Marche d'un pas plus ferme au vrai but de ta vie;
Travaille, souffre, attends, ton heure doit venir;
Tu dois laisser un nom à la patrie,
Tu dois laisser un nom à l'avenir.
A travers les écueils, à travers les orages,
Dirige toi vers ce but de tes jours;
Que ton ciel soit serein ou chargé de nuages,
Marche à ton but, marche toujours.

AMPERE.

THE news of the evasion of the Pope soon reached Palazzo Clementi, brought by Cecchi, who belonged to the Lower Chamber, and to the party whose chief representative was the Prince of Canino — Citizen Buonaparte, as he loved to be called. The Pope had left an address to the Parliament, on the reading of which a fierce debate ensued, and a proclamation was issued by the Ministry, lamenting the Pontiff's departure and exhorting to peace. There was a violent conflict of feeling in the city, exultation, doubt, or dismay, according to the political creed of each citizen, and deep regret in all the calm and farsighted.

The feeling of the women in general was not ill shown by Menica, who came to her mistress with great, terrified eyes, exclaiming, 'He's gone, signora, he's gone! what will become of us? they say we shall all be excommunicated! And I hear that it was predicted by a poor girl just dead in the hospital! She saw in a dream Madonna walking out of the city with a golden glory round her head, and Pio Nono and all the cardinals were following her two and two, signora.'

'Yes, truly, like the beasts going into the ark!'

'Dear signora! and my own mother dreamed that Rome would be chastised unless she were more humble and grateful! And besides ——'

'Hold your tongue, silly one!' said Madama Cecchi, assuming indignation, to hide the impression made on her by these portents.

'But listen, dear signora! You saw yourself the dreadful fiery serpent in the sky last week; all Rome saw it, and many like me say that it was a serpent and nothing else; and my confessor told me, when I went to the Caravita to-day, that it was a sign that the city was given up to the power of the evil one! He said so much, so much, and asked me such a number of questions, more than usual, it seems to me; I thought that I should never get home! *Ma cosa avete* — what is it, signora?'

'*Non ho nulla* — nothing, nothing. What kind of questions?' asked the padrona, with anxious jealousy.

'Eh, I don't remember; who comes here, and what is talked of, and such things.'

'And he urged you to leave me, eh?'

'Oh no, indeed, signora; on the contrary, he said that if I noticed all that passed in the family I might be the means of saving you all, and Signorina Irene too. He said it was so sad a thing that so good a lady should be a heretic; and that is true, is it not? it is a compassion to think of!'

'Blessed girl! The raven grieves for the lamb and then eats it!' ejaculated Madama Cecchi to herself in considerable perturbation.

'All the cardinals are slipping away,' pursued Menica, returning to the original topic of her discourse, 'and the ambassadors, and the strangers, and what will there be left for us poor people to do! No buying or selling! And they say the cholera will certainly come to punish us!'

'There! go along! I have no time to listen to your chattering, you grasshopper! Is your master come in?'

'No, signora. Ah, we were much happier when all was quiet; there was a little tyranny, to be sure, but we had our *festas* and processions and the *Girandola;* but how can there be such things without the Pope? Lisa has had her lover killed in the war, and Monica ——'

'You simpleton! is not that better than Ippolita Rella, whose husband was carried off in the night, nobody knows where, for

letting a room to an exile who had ventured back to see his own sky, and hear his own language again? Has he ever been heard of since? Is it not better to die for one's country than live in a prison? Eh! go out of my sight, and don't make me think of past things!'

'But oh, signora! do you know what dreadful things are done? The people were pulling the confessionals out of the churches, as I passed to-day, and burning them in Piazza del Popolo! and cursing and vowing they would never marry girls who went to confess! and they said such terrible things of the priests! None will dare to stay.'

'*Manco male!*' said the padrona, divided between superstition and republicanism; 'plenty will stay, I assure you, and nobody will harm them.'

This was true. No one harmed such priests as ventured to remain openly, but ill fared it with any who were detected in disguise. Most of the cardinals had fled with haste and secrecy, but a few, like Cardinal Tosti, Governor of San Michele, stayed at their posts, unmolested and even welcome. Cardinal Tosti received public thanks for his confidence in the people, and answered with frankness honorable to him and to them, that he was influenced by exactly the same motive as those who went — attachment to Pio Nono.

If the ultra party had hoped to establish a republic at once, they failed; a large faction in Rome would have gladly recalled the Pope on certain terms. There was a kind of pause, filled up with negotiations, difficulties, and debates; the Ministry passed laws, carried out some pressing reforms, and tasted the bitterness as well as the sweets of power. Messengers came and went between Rome and Gaeta, where the Pope had taken refuge, and Naples threw every obstacle in her power in the way of an accommodation between Pio Nono and his subjects. This is not the place for discussing the motives that led him to that kingdom, rather than to his own Cività Vecchia, nor the fatal consequences that ensued from this self-exile. From Gaeta he sent briefs and despatches, that did but destroy such credit at Rome as the Ministry possessed, and made confusion worse confounded. There, Naples, Spain, and Austria had every opportunity of in-

fluencing him, and there he remained immovably until his return —a return as mournful as his flight.

During this interval Leone and his own small party remained passive. They found no favor in the eyes of the republicans, nor could they act with men whose opinions differed so widely from their own. With deep foreboding they looked on, unable to stem the torrent, and protesting by their silence and inaction against the course which public events had taken. Whether they were right, or whether those judged correctly, who believed that nothing but complete change could reform Rome, none can now say, for the experiment was not worked out. Leone could only act on his convictions.

About this time, as he was lingering by a bookstall in Piazza Navona, he met one with whom his thoughts had often been, but whom he had not seen since he had been invalided. Padre Rinaldi had been charged by the Pope with a mission, which kept him absent after the war had concluded; a mission suggested by some of those of Pio Nino's advisers, who dreaded the reforming priest as if he had been the arch fiend. He had since been at Gaeta to report the issue of his mission. His work now lay at Rome. Leone recognised him with joyful reverence. 'Father! would that you had come sooner! It is much to have you even now!'

'I have seen our hopes perish in Upper Italy,' he answered; 'I come to stand by their death-bed here.'

'There is abundant work for you here, father. Many posts are vacant,' said Leone, with an inflexion of voice betraying something like contempt for those who had deserted them.

Padre Rinaldi's thoughts were with the work in which he had labored before he went away; the stern ecclesiastical reforms which he had stimulated the Pope to undertake, and prosecuted unflinchingly, armed with the Pope's sanction, and regardless of the host of enemies whom he was creating, How many conferences he had with Pio Nono, when all was fair and promising, and both dreamed of a Utopia! He knew now that his hopes, like those of so many others, were dashed to the ground — knew it by his own farsightedness even before the news of Pio Nono's

flight had reached him — knew it afresh from the coldness and ill-concealed triumph which he met with at Gaeta.

'Work that calls for diligent labor,' he answered Leone, '"for the night cometh when no man can work." Yet a little while, and more than Egyptian darkness will cover Rome. I know Pio Nono well; he will return, recalled perhaps, perhaps restored by foreign arms ——'

'*Obbligatissimo!* Sooner let Rome lie a heap of ruins,' burst forth Leone with a glow of anger on his brow.

'Return as he may, it will be to distrust himself, and yield up his power into any hand that may choose to take it. He will seek for peace henceforward in a contemplative life, while every reform will be swept away and his people will groan again in vain in their bondage. Till then let us work. My college — is it prospering? Barberà and Ansoldo at their posts?'

'Barberà is here; Ansoldo went long ago with Cardinal A——. The college has not progressed a step since you went.'

'As I expected. I had not counted on such an absence, otherwise ——. Ah, the Ministry will countenance it?'

'Yes; it was discussed, and a subsidy voted for it, only yesterday.'

'That is well,' said Padre Rinaldi, mentally recalling his views for this cherished work, a school for the middle class, free from the vexatious restrictions of the Jesuit colleges and seminaries, and on a much more liberal scheme of education. He had fully planned it before he had left Rome, had submitted his views to the Pope, and obtained full sanction and approbation.

'Nota, you are taking no part in public affairs?' he asked, suddenly turning his falcon glance on his companion.

'None. I cannot act with these men, but opposition would be worse than useless. In Heaven's name, let us not quarrel among ourselves!'

'Take Ansoldo's post.'

Leone looked up rejoiced. 'You think me worthy, father? I have craved for employment, and it is no slight honor to work with you.'

'You have studied geology.'

'How do you know that, father?'

Padre Rinaldi smiled. 'Do you yet need to be told, that the priests and the police know everything in Rome? I can show you a minute report of your proceedings — a police character of you far from flattering. Good — you shall lecture on geology in my school.'

Leone looked astonished — geology, so strictly prohibited! He said, 'Yet you believe that a few months will restore the old *régime?*' and he spoke the words with absolute loathing, his tone expressing to the full how utterly hateful that *régime* had been.

'Let us do what we can till then. At least, we will leave a recollection, a precedent, a proof that such plans as mine can be carried out. There is enormous power in a recollection. If a people remember that they once were free, some day they will assuredly resolve to be free again. It is much to plant an idea; even if it be cut down, it will spring up again. Nothing can be done with the old generation, everything with the new; and on this the Jesuits act; they aim at education above all things; they get all the schools into their hands — schools and confessionals,' said Padre Rinaldi, with a slight, sarcastic smile, which betrayed, not the jealousy of a priest of another order, but a much deeper feeling, as he mentally enumerated the 'congregations' under the Jesuits in Rome.

'It is true. No life is wasted which remains as a beacon in men's memory,' Leone added, with a calm, mournful smile, 'even though the objects on which it was spent remain as far off as ever.'

Padre Rinaldi nodded assent.

'Far off as ever! Fair vision of a moment! a star shining through clouds which have veiled it again,' Leone continued; 'liberty, with her fearless eyes and her pure hands, vanishes to give place to anarchy ending in slavery.'

'Anarchy, called by some freedom,' said the priest.

'We have but obtained tyranny in a new form — the tyranny of the many, a false divinity instead of the true. When will men learn that where liberty is, there law reigns supreme, reverenced and loved as each man's own best treasure. Where her

kingdom is, men speak frankly and act fearlessly; none come between husband and wife, father and child; the poor is not favored for his poverty nor the rich for his riches.'

'And in the day when that liberty shall beam, the Church shall take her own place again, leading and guiding all nations, a shelter for the weak, a mother under whose wings science and art and knowledge shall flourish; and mankind will regard her as that for which all unconsciously crave — something so pure, so holy, so mighty, that in its presence we can but kneel and adore.'

So spoke the reforming priest and the liberal, both alike dreamers, whose visions were too noble, too pure for common eyes — two alone amongst hundreds bent on selfish ends. Leone was a devout Roman Catholic; he looked up to Padre Rinaldi with an intensity of affection and respect, rescued, by knowing him, from the infection of that contempt and hatred of the ecclesiastic, so mournfully common in Italy, and finding in him all the counsel, the sympathy, and the wisdom which *should* characterize those who take the souls of others into their hands.

Padre Rinaldi looked at him again, and asked, with a complete change of subject, in the singularly winning tone which made all he said so attractive, 'And when will your marriage take place?'

'In the spring — come poverty or riches, father. I have shrunk from letting her share my fate; but I was wrong; I did not then know that women have some alchemy by which they draw consolation from care and poverty, when they share it with those whom they love. Every day has taught me to value her more; every anxious hour — and they are many — that we have watched together, has made her dearer.'

'She is a noble creature — but a heretic!' The tone was very gently reproachful.

'Father, being such, I know that no confessor can step between us.'

Padre Rinaldi sighed, and his brow darkened. He too had found that problem unsolvable.

'My wish is that she should quit her profession,' said Leone; 'she is now judged entirely by politics; the *Papiste* make it a

point of conscience to cry her down, and the liberals to praise her. Art cannot flourish in such an atmosphere.'

Padre Rinaldi's eye was suddenly caught by a placard on a wall, inscribed with 'Giuseppe Mazzini, Roman citizen,' in large letters.

'So you have got that arch plotter here!'

'He came the other night, very quietly, on foot I believe; but you see how he is received.'

'Returned like half the exiles, embittered by wrongs and absence, filled with new schemes of rebellion!'

'Yes; such is the lesson taught by exile,' Leone answered; 'and what is that learnt by the many who are "*admonished*," forbidden to exercise a profession, driven to despair, and forced as it were to meditate continually on their wrongs, since they have no other occupation!'

'Ah, madness and delusion,' muttered the priest; 'inaction, inaction! Where are the thoughts of men forced to sit idle, with souls burning with life and energy? — in the world and in the cloister, ill fare those whose hearts' cry is "let us strive, suffer, fail, but do not suffocate us with this sense of life wasted, power suppressed!" And how many such are there in Italy! The end is heresy, unbelief, and revolution. If an angel came down from heaven, and called to this people from St. Angelo yonder, his voice would no more be heard now, than yours or mine would be beside the warring torrent which dashes down the Saint Gotthardt! And yet this Gordian knot was slowly unwinding itself, when one accursed deed complicated it again perhaps for centuries. Did you ever see a flood restrained for a moment by a dyke, which at last tottered and fell, and the waters rushed on, bearing bridge and dwelling and forest away with them? Such a dyke was Rossi! Now, never shall you nor I nor any living see Rome truly free. Blood is on her, and her children.'

He spoke aloud, others besides Leone heard, and he walked the street conspicuous from his tall form and priestly attire. There was no longer the old affluence of friar and priest in Rome, but only murmurs of respect accosted him, though there was a fast increasing irritation springing up against the ecclesiastics. Old scores were remembered against them; men had

learnt to look upon them as police officers, as tyrants, as executioners, and now moreover as obstacles in the way of a reconciliation with the Pope.

Leone returned to Palazzo Clementi in the dusk of evening. Angry voices reached him as he approached the sitting-room of the Cecchi; he paused, and they were still; and, when he went in, there was no trace of emotion; Cecchi sat smoking with a gloomy countenance, his wife was in a languid attitude, and wore a weary, abstracted look; scarcely seeming to perceive Leone's entrance. He addressed her husband on some indifferent topic, in the midst of which her eyes suddenly brimmed over with tears, and with some inarticulate words she hurried out of the room. Cecchi took no notice for a few moments, then looking up with exceeding bitterness he said, 'There, you see what comes of it — Scripture says, man and wife shall be one; the priest says they shall be *three*. That is a good woman, a true, honest, loving woman; she loves me heartily, and yet I had rather face my worst enemy than come home to her. When we married, she was young, gay — she had her friends, her visits, her servants — she laughed at the priests, and piqued herself on being an *esprit fort*. In my troubles she stood by me, and hated the men and the government that caused them. Now, of late, behold what a change! Her confessor has got her into his claws, she repents of the past, becomes devout — '

'Takes refuge in religion. Can you wonder, my friend?'

'Oh, most welcome as far as I am concerned! But she loves me still; unfortunately, she cannot be content to let me lose my soul if I like. I must go to confess also! I tell her I am a sceptic, a heretic, a Mahomedan, for all she knows; at all events, confess I will not. Her confessor urges her to tell my secrets — she is too faithful, but she considers that she risks her salvation for my sake. Thus night and day I meet with reproaches, accusations, tears, or silence and gloom. I would rather she would at once tell that priestly spy all that she knows! Be thankful, Nota, be thankful that your bride is a heretic!'

It was a strange comment on the feeling which Leone had expressed to Padre Rinaldi. When he sought Vincenzo's sitting-room, and his friend held out a welcoming hand, and Irene turned

her smiling eyes to him, with, 'Well, what news?' the peace and brightness of the scene gave him a sudden vivid feeling of rest and refreshment. It was as if the clouds had suddenly parted in a stormy sky and had given a glimpse of deep serene blue and shining stars between them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Sing on, my nightingale, my songstress fair;
The fame of thy sweet voice, so full, so clear,
Doth reach to France and mount the Emperor's stair;
And if the Pagan king thy voice should hear,
His richest gifts he would present to thee,
And to his people publish a decree,
That to the Faith each Pagan should pass over,
Be made a Christian, and become thy lover.
Canto.

'HERE is a note from Signora Olivetti, proposing that you should go with her to that property of hers at Santa Chiara. You had better go, if you can find time,' said Vincenzo.

'It is a very long drive. She does not name Imelda,' said Irene, glancing through the note; 'but I suppose . . . . Well, Menica, say that I shall be ready when she comes to-morrow.'

Accordingly Signora Olivetti called the next day for Irene, who enjoyed the prospect of the drive, and told her so as she stepped into the carriage. Signora Olivetti looked care-worn, and smiled but faintly in return for Irene's animated thanks. 'Ah! you look weary, you have been much engaged of late?' she said.

'Yes; but my chief care has been Madame Marriotti; she is going almost immediately.'

'Indeed! I did not believe — My dear Irene, you will find me guilty of egotism, but I asked you to come chiefly to talk to you on a subject which I have at heart. I want to speak of Imelda. That is why she is not here. I sent her to spend the day with her aunt, who will take her to see Lalla and Antonia at their convent. They are in education ——'

'Yes,' said Irene, between inquiry and assent, for she saw that

Signora Olivetti was lingering, half unwilling to come to the point.

'I will tell you presently, when we are out of the city. There, now we can hear each other speak. People talk of nothing but public affairs now-a-days, but private ones go on still, even though the Neapolitan Government will not let our ambassadors cross the frontier! We must think a little of domestic matters all the same, Irene! My husband is not yet likely to return; indeed, I hope he will not ——'

Irene understood. Signor Olivetti was a prudent man, who had long ago made a comfortable little fortune, and now, though he wished well to the liberal cause, he had not the least inclination to mix himself up with it. His wife had higher views, so she could better bear to see him absent, than enjoying a selfish security in Rome.

'There is a thing on which my heart has been fixed for years,' continued Signora Olivetti; 'if I have ever indulged a dream it was this; I believed it secure, but now ——'

'Imelda?'

'Ah, you divine! What, you know, then?'

'I know that only what concerns Imelda can so move you, dear signora.'

'Is that all? Irene, I am going to trust entirely to your prudence, and speak to you on a subject which I have never named even to my husband. You know Luigi Ravelli well; tell me why he has delayed, perpetually delayed, his marriage with my daughter? Why has he one week returned to his old friendliness, then treated her again with indifference the next?'

Irene was silent.

'Ah, you know, but you will not say. You know it as a secret? Good, I ask no more; but at least you can tell me whether you believe that he will ever fulfil his engagement?'

'Yes, I do.'

Signora Olivetti drew a deep breath and studied Irene's face. 'Your reasons?' she asked, unaware how imperatively anxious was her manner.

'I believe,' said Irene, 'that he will find out, there is no one so lovable as Imelda; that his present feelings will pass away.'

'But when? when? Remember that she cannot waste her youth in waiting for him to come to his senses. Listen; I have had an offer of marriage for her — excellent, perfectly satisfactory. Is it not my duty to communicate it to her father? But if I do so, I must tell him all, and I know he would break off her present engagement, and insist on her accepting this offer.'

'Do not do so, signora; rather let her take the veil, for then she might still without sin pray for Luigi.'

'Ah! you think thus! I know not which way to turn — I, who ask no counsel at other times except from my own conscience!'

'Without doubt Luigi will be in Rome immediately, since the Garibaldi legion are coming from Ravenna.'

'Yes; but what does that advantage me? He will have grown used to that free, wild, perilous life; he is like a fish which has darted from a quiet lake into a great river. He will never settle down to a quiet, monotonous existence.'

'Dear signora, it ought to have some charm, if half be true that we hear of the hardships the volunteers went through. He must have had enough of wandering, I think. Surely a home must be more precious to one who has tossed about the world a stranger everywhere.'

'You may be right, Irene; Heaven grant it,' replied Signora Olivetti, sighing; 'but it seems to me as if I had planted my little rose-tree on the banks of a rushing stream that might carry it away and break it to pieces at any moment. And yet, if he did but love her, how happy she might be! I have tried to put him out of her thoughts, but in vain; all brings him perpetually to her mind. Ah, love is very weak, after all — I would have given my life to make that child happy, and yet I cannot so much as raise my finger between her and sorrow!'

They were on the Campagna, now fresh green after heavy rain, and girdled by hills which seemed, as it were, full of light, yet which cast long, dark amethyst shadows over the plain. A covered bridge, over a clear dimpling stream, was just before them, a train of pack-horses were descending the bank to drink, and further down, a raft appeared, propelled through the overhanging boughs by a man with a long pole. A butterfly flew

past full of vigor and life in the warm sunshine, happier than its kindred who were fluttering over the arid, sunburnt Campagna, in the summer months, and vainly seeking a flower. Overhead the sky was intensest blue, but above Rome it was fast darkening, gathering gloom every moment; a stone pine stood black against the grey sky on the horizon; the mist wrapped it quickly round, it grew dim and dimmer — disappeared at last in the driving rain, and a flash and a growl of thunder, told that Rome was enveloped in one of those almost tropical storms which fill the streets with water, and make the Tiber rise some ten feet in a few hours. Only a few drops reached the travellers, who drove quickly on for several hours, towards the little village, where was the property after whose welfare Signora Olivetti came to look. Santa Chiara stood on the hill-side, picturesque, straggling, and dirty, consisting of a villa, a few cottages, a church, and a small inn; and it looked down on one of those lovely Italian views that witch the heart, and remain there as a joy and a vision of beauty for ever.

Signora Olivetti ordered the coachman to drive to the house of her bailiff, where she intended to rest, but the bailiff came out to warn her that his wife lay ill of fever, and that the house was an unsafe abode. They went to the little inn instead, and while some refreshment was being prepared, the signora visited her vines, poultry and sheep, and heard how all fared. She had made the expedition more for the sake of seeing Irène undisturbed, and unknown to Imelda, than really to visit the farm, where all was going on well.

They returned to the inn, which possessed but one guest room, with white walls and scanty furniture, and a fire of boughs on an open hearth. The landlord met them at the door with equal courtesy and embarrassment; there were two strangers just arrived; he hoped, he trusted that their presence would not incommode the illustrious ladies. Signora Olivetti was a person of great importance at Santa Chiara.

'Of what country?'

'A thousand pardons, excellence; one is French, but the other, he seems to be — to be Austrian.'

Word of abhorrence to the Italian ears that heard it.

'We do not sit down with Austrians,' replied Signora Olivetti, haughtily; and Irene assented with a rapid gesture; 'you must let us have another room.'

'Signora, it afflicts me that there is none that I could venture to offer you except a bedroom up-stairs.'

'That will do.'

The debate had been observed within and partly understood; a gentleman in uniform came to the door and said in Italian with a French accent, 'Do not let us cause these ladies annoyance; my friend and I should much prefer leaving the house.'

'There is no occasion,' said Signora Olivetti, not in the least propitiated, since the courteous Frenchman claimed the Austrian as a friend. 'Brocchi, show us the room;' so sweeping the stranger a curtsy, she passed up the stairs, followed by Irene, who was saying to herself in perplexity, 'I have seen that face before.'

But the Frenchman did not recognise her. He turned with a smile to the landlord when he came down stairs, and asked, 'Who are those ladies?'

'The elder is the Signora Olivetti, monsieur; her family have property here; and the younger — Giacomo, what did you say the signorina's name was?' he demanded of Signora Olivetti's servant, who was lounging near, observing the foreigners with no friendly eye.

'She is Mademoiselle Mori,' replied Giacomo, in a tone which implied that if that were not explanation sufficient, it was entirely his hearer's fault.

'Mori! ah!' said the Frenchman, with interest; 'the cantatrice?'

'Yes, signor,' said Giacomo, slightly mollified.

'Monsieur knows the signorina?' asked the landlord.

'Ass!' ejaculated Giacomo with boundless contempt.

'I have heard of her, my friend,' replied the French officer; 'her fame has spread into France, though it does not appear to reach fourteen miles from Rome. That was a fine face,' he added to himself, and returned to triumph over his friend, who had sat still and seen nothing.

The bedroom had a vine-covered balcony, still thickly wreathed

with rich red and brown garlands, in which the blood of the grape seemed showing itself. Irene stepped out on it from the curtainless window, and looked at the landscape below — the distant mountain peaks which seemed to quiver in light, the undulating plain, the vineyards near at hand, the swift torrent pouring close to the church with its marigold stone window, the ruined casino, approached by a long dark cypress avenue. There was a lonely, deserted, decaying look in the mountain village ; and yet, solitary as it seemed, it was not far from a high road along which many travellers passed. Signora Olivetti joined Irene, and they sat in the balcony while the host arranged their dinner. The room afforded only two hard chairs, so it was well that the party was a small one. Its single decoration was a cluster of little prints, representing the Virgin and half a dozen saints, stuck on the wall close to the bed ; a few flowers stood in a jar below ; and there was a walnut-wood table, a long chest and a bed. The room might have served an anchorite ; it certainly had a very monastic air in its extreme simplicity, but the fare offered was by no means ascetic ; the table was speedily covered with a good homespun cloth ; and an omelet, a dish of roasted kid, bread, dried figs and oranges made a dinner which need not have been despised by more fastidious travellers than the two Italian ladies.

Signora Olivetti's face had lost the haughty look which the name of Austrian had called up ; she talked kindly and familiarly with the landlord, and seemed to know and be interested in his family affairs. He came and went, waiting on the obnoxious guests below as well as on the ladies above, aided by his daughter, who went about in the untidy half-laced peasant bodice, and sang snatches of some old ballad about the seven galleys of Spain.

A long absence of both father and daughter presently caused Signora Olivetti to marvel ; Irene stepped out on the balcony again, to watch the clear changing lustres steal over the Campagna, and chase the shadows cast by each little hillock and dimple over its wide expanse. She looked out with the artist love of Nature inherited from her father, and was turning to call her companion's attention to the view, when indications of an unusual stir in the village caught her eye. There were women

hastily dragging their children after them into the church, hurried passers to and fro, eager voices, a knot of talkers, amongst whom was the landlord, gesticulating on the open space under the trees before the house. Irene tried to read the pantomime; she could not hear the words, but she plainly perceived that the news had brought an extremity of terror with it. Now a new comer hurried to add his mite to the general excitement, then one of the speakers suddenly left the group. The French officer came out, spoke, listened, and looked keenly in a direction pointed out by half a dozen hands, beckoned to his companion, and stood talking to him apart. Irene's comments had ere this brought Signora Olivetti to her side, and they were in eager speculation, when Giacomo and the landlord entered with wide open eyes and mouths, explaining in duet: '*Signore mie!* Garibaldi and his men! the Scarlet Demons! they are at hand, they will pillage us; and as for those foreigners ——'

'What! coming here?'

'A woman on her way from the wood has seen them; she flew home to warn the village; half the people are fled already!'

'My good friend, Garibaldi is doubtless on his way to Rome; there is no fear.'

'The signora does not know these men; they are not like our soldiers, who, all the time they were in Lombardy, never stole so much as a dish of polenta — these wear the livery of the evil one — they eat children; they pillage on all sides, and kill whoever resists. Ah, Holy Virgin, there they come!'

And a wild looking troop were now seen riding up the steep mountain road, clad in the red tunics which had alarmed the imaginations of the villagers, now appearing, now disappearing in its windings, their arms flashing in the sunlight through the cloud of dust which accompanied them.

'The strangers! They will massacre the Austrian, at all events! Rosa! where art thou?' cried the landlord, hurrying down, leaving Giacoma trembling like a leaf, with his mahogany cheeks turning nearly white with fear. Signora Olivetti looked at Irene, not quite at ease, though she had kept a brave countenance. 'If only by good luck Luigi is there!' said she.

'Make them welcome; offer them dinner at our expense,' suggested Irene.

'A good thought. Giacomo — no, stay here; I will go down myself,' and she descended to the lower room, where were the foreigners, on their guard, but cool and outwardly indifferent.

'Brocchi,' said she to the host, 'beg these gentlemen who are coming, to accept a dinner at my expense, and ——'

'Signora, what is to be done with these foreigners?'

'They need be under no apprehensions; they have Italians to deal with,' said Signora Olivetti, emphasizing the word *Italians*, as if to recall the Austrian enormities.

The Frenchman smiled, bowed, and continued smoking his cigar; his companion appeared not to comprehend the language spoken round him; but no more could be said, for the next moment the clatter of horses' feet was close at hand, the open space without was filled with dismounting soldiers, and immediately the room was crowded with wild, black bearded figures, clamoring for the landlord. Signora Olivetti stepped forward calmly, her eyes seeking out the leader of the noisy troop; 'Gentlemen, let a Roman have the pleasure ——' she began; but at her voice, a soldier turned quickly round, uttering her name. She knew who it must be, but hardly recognised Luigi in the bearded, bronzed features, further disguised by a steeple-crowned hat with a bunch of flowers stuck in it. The meeting brought order instantly into the troop; all looked on, eager to see what friend their captain had found.

'I suppose it is you, Luigi! this is fortunate indeed! I hardly dared to hope you might be among them, and we heard such terrible accounts of your men!'

'We are used to finding villages deserted, and convents barred against us,' he answered, merrily, and a laugh from the rest showed that certain old adventures were recalled by his words. 'And yet we pay as we go, I assure you, and harm no one but the enemy. Now, my friends, it seems to me there is no room for you here; your dinner shall be served to you out yonder.'

'Remember, these are my guests,' said Signora Olivetti.

They made a universal murmur of thanks, withdrew at once, and settled themselves under the trees, lying on the ground, or sitting on benches, laughing, smoking, singing, and questioning Giacomo, whose fears had vanished at once before the sound of

Luigi's voice, and who was now curiously examining the mysterious American saddles, capable of being turned into a kind of tent, which had been taken from the horses' backs.

Just as Luigi was beginning an explanation to Signora Olivetti, the landlord again appeared with a troubled countenance. 'Signora, I have the best will, you know it, but who can dig gold out of a granite rock? what is a net without fish? I have nothing but bread and wine to give these men! I dare not tell them so!'

'Oh, is that all?' said Luigi, and he went out, looked down on an open pasture where sheep and oxen were feeding, and spoke to one of the men, who instantly got up, sprang on the bare back of his horse, and darted off, waving a long cord in his hand. Two or three more made free with the wood stack, and with practised hands built up a pile. The landlord looked on blank with wonder, not diminished by the swift reappearance of the rider, dragging an unhappy sheep after him by his lasso. In a short time it was neatly skinned, and roasting on the fire which crackled merrily, and sent up a cloud of mingled sparks and smoke towards the sky. 'Holy Virgin!' ejaculated the host, and he hurried to prepare whatever provisions he could find, as if expecting to be killed and eaten himself, if his stock should fail. Luigi was meanwhile explaining that Garibaldi's scheme for going to Venice, which was still keeping up a desperate resistance, had been suddenly changed by the summons to Rome which had reached him at Ravenna.

'I am the advanced guard,' said Luigi, gaily; 'what do you think of my troop? They are good children, after all; but their reputation is a famous thing, it is worth more to us than another regiment; it has emptied many a village, where we should have lost half our number, had the poltroons stayed to fight. Two nights ago we found a convent barred against us; there was no other shelter, and we broke it open. Not a living soul in it! all the monks had fled, locking each separate cell! That put the men past all patience, and I could not prevent their turning the whole place upside down; one fellow came out in a monk's hood, another in the white and black mantle, another in an embroidered cope — you would have died of laughter if you had

seen them! and when I called them together to quiet them a little, the rascals came to answer to their names in these costumes, each with a lighted taper in his hand!'

An irrepressible laugh from the Frenchman betrayed that he understood what was said. Signora Olivetti lowered her voice, and said, 'You will protect these foreigners, though I believe one is an Austrian?'

The change in Luigi's face was startling, but he turned abruptly away. 'They are perfectly safe; I am not obliged to know anything about them. Are you alone?'

'Mademoiselle Mori is with me.'

'Irene! where?'

Hearing his voice she ran down-stairs, and questions and replies were rapidly exchanged. He was famishing for Roman news; did not even know of Leone's safety, and his joy on hearing it made Irene his fast friend for ever. While they stood talking, the landlord and Giacomo were briskly serving the guests outside; and a peasant or two might be seen venturing into sight, and then approaching with eager curiosity. Presently one of the men rose, and came in, doffing his broad hat, and looking at Luigi, while he bowed deeply to the ladies. He was the bearer of a message from the whole troop to their captain; they had heard from Giacomo that Mademoiselle Mori was a famous cantatrice; would he intercede with her to sing to them?

Irene laughed and hesitated; Luigi laughed too, and pushed the soldier towards her.

'There, plead your own cause, my friend; bright eyes do not usually make you so bashful!'

'Signorina, it is a great liberty that we take,' said the soldier, with a frank and gallant bearing which itself pleaded strongly for him; 'and if you consent, we can only offer you our thanks — the thanks of men who come to fight for Rome.'

'You cannot refuse, Irene,' said Signora Olivetti, some lurking romance aroused within her by the singular scene. 'Come, consent; but we must be gone soon.'

The two foreigners looked on, entertained and curious.

'Tell your comrades that I can refuse nothing to men who ask

me thus, friend,' said Irene; and she and Signora Olivetti went to the up-stairs room, where dinner was speedily served to Luigi, as it had been to the ladies. Irene stepped out on the vine-trellised balcony again; and, leaning on the rail, with the gorgeous autumn garlands hanging in rich profusion around her, she surveyed the scene for a moment, the glorious landscape, the troop of soldiers in their strange and picturesque costume, lying under the trees around the dying fire, their flashing eyes uplifted to the songstress in eager expectation. Small groups of peasants had gathered here and there; at the door of the church, the women and children were clustering, eager and timid. It was a scene to inspire the dullest, much more an artist soul like Irene's, as she thought of all that this gallant band had endured for Italy; how readily, too, they had responded to the call of Rome, menaced by perils as yet uncertain, but daily more threatening — perils which could only be averted by a steadfast, united spirit; and as she thought thus, there came to her lips a song of Leone's, which had been such a favorite among the volunteers, that it had reached both the Lombard battalion and the Garibaldi legion. It had been sung on bleak Monte Suelo, and by the watch-fires over Lago Maggiore. Every man there knew it, and greeted the first notes with scarcely suppressed enthusiasm. Translated into English it might run thus: —

Princes of Rome, sons of gallant old houses,
Sprung from the heroes of days that are passed,
Come from your revels, and leave your carouses,
Prove you true heirs of your fathers at last.
Good-sworded band, take ye your stand;
Who but Rome's lords should fight first for their land?

Burghers, away from your goods and your chattels;
Has not your country been bought and been sold?
Show yourselves changers of blows in the battles,
Dealers in steel, and not dealers in gold.
'Gainst their fierce horde, play with the sword;
Is not a burgher as good as a lord?

Priests, close your volumes of musty old learning,
Leave each good saint all alone in his shrine;
No more dull sermons; let words that are burning
Tell us that Liberty's name is divine.
God's cause our call, Heaven if we fall;
Does not your Gospel preach Freedom for all?

Soldiers, see Italy's proud banner waving.
What! will ye shrink from an Austrian foe?
Still for our life-blood their sabres are craving,
Still their flags flaunt in the vale of the Po.
Soon shall they hear vengeance is near,
Better die free, than like slaves live in fear.

Peasants, come trooping from each little village,
Leave the plain golden with billowy grain;
Vineyard and field must this year lack their tillage;
Better be waste than the German's domain.
Wide your arm sweep, deal your blows deep,
Goodly and rich be the crop that you reap.

Romans! whatever your rank and your station,
Princes and peasants, and children and old,
Think of the wrongs of our down-trodden nation,
Think of what glories our fathers have told.
Theirs though the might, ours is the right,
God and His angels before us shall fight!

As Irene sang from her soul, her beautiful voice and animated countenance might well delight her soldier audience, who applauded frantically, starting up from the ground, waving their hats, shouting and gesticulating as she concluded, and sending up a deputation to thank the songstress. Their *evvivas* pursued the carriage as it drove away. Luigi hoped to be in Rome ere nightfall with his detachment, but Signora Olivetti did not wait for his escort. She thought it best to avoid such a sensation as would have been created, had she returned surrounded by the Garibaldi legion. Irene had had the two foreigners for listeners, as well as the soldiers and peasants. Their plaudits mingled with those of the Italians, but little did she guess that the French officer was an old acquaintance, and as little did Colonel de Crillon recognise in the young cantatrice that little maiden whom he had encountered in the Bosco, and forgotten years ago.

CHAPTER XXXV.

L'è rivvenuto il fior di Primavera,
L'è ritornato la verdura al prato,
L'è ritornato chi prima non c'era,
E ritornato il mio innamorato.

RISPETTO.

COLONEL DE CRILLON had business in Rome. He had been despatched on a confidential and semi-political mission to ascertain how matters really were going there, and what were the sentiments of the French residents towards the new *régime*. Before they left the little inn, he had made Luigi's acquaintance with soldierly ease and good fellowship, and the supposed Austrian turned out to be a Pole, a nationality that at once recommended itself to the volunteers, who had served with the gallant Kamiensky and his Polish battalion in Lombardy. Moreover, the poet Mickiewitz had joined the liberal side so heartily at Rome, that his countrymen were in high favor with the people.

Colonel de Crillon and his friend rode to Rome with the Garibaldi detachment, and were witnesses of the astonishment and amusement which 'the red demons' created as they trotted through the streets. Heads crowded together at doors and windows, and Luigi was infinitely diverted to find himself unrecognised, and yet producing such a sensation. His spirits had been rising to their highest pitch from the moment he had found himself within sight of St. Peter's; he looked round in the streets as if he needs must soon see some of his own family, and presently a short, stout personage, with a ruddy face, bright black eyes and white hair, came down a side street, wondering at the commotion which he perceived before him in the Corso — caught sight of the cavalcade, and stopped short to gaze, in

amazement. Luigi recognised his father, took off his hat to him, waved it over his head, and shouted, '*Viva* the Signor Ravelli!' His soldiers, as great madcaps as himself, instantly caught the joke, waved their hats and joined in the shout; then, with a hearty, universal laugh, all galloped out of sight towards the quarters appointed for them, leaving Signor Ravelli in a state of blank amazement. But some light dawned at last; the fierce wrinkles between his eyebrows relaxed, exceeding satisfaction diffused itself over his face; he burst into a short chuckle, and set off homewards at unusual and undignified speed.

The general sensation had not yet reached Casa Ravelli. Still and tranquil as usual sat its mistress. No presentiment that the dear son, for whom she was even then praying, was close at hand, had thrilled through her, nor changed the perfect calm of her countenance. It was the meek, passive, abstracted look of a cloistered nun that dwelt on her face, wife and mother though she was. Human interests seemed not to exist for this woman, whom all the devout of her acquaintance regarded as a saint, while they spoke, awestruck, of the contemplative, holy life that she led. In her secluded, monotonous existence, meditation and prayer entirely absorbed her. She fully carried out the exalted ideal life conceived by St. Dominic, when he devised the rosary, with its long meditation for each bead. Outside her quiet room the world surged like a stormy sea, but its sound never reached her ear, its spray never flung one drop upon her brow. She led the life rather of a recluse in distant ages than that of a woman of the restless, agitated nineteenth century. Married young to a husband twice as old as herself, whose love showed itself by angry, ceaseless jealousy, she soon resigned herself to as secluded a life as he could have wished; but he had never gained her affections, which were speedily absorbed in those religious practices in which alone she found peace. Two children were born and died; her heart followed them into heaven. She was entirely devoted to her confessor; a machine in his hands; the teaching of her Church was followed out by her to the utmost. And who shall say that a true and simple heart shall not be accepted even though it have not learned aright? In Signora Ravelli's face was the look of peace achieved

— that peace, attained through much sorrow, which indeed 'passeth all understanding.' Several years after the death of her second child, Luigi was born, and only what concerned him now moved her. In any matter that touched that affectionate, reckless, unstable son she was but a weak woman after all.

When Signor Ravelli came in she raised her eyes: hasty movements and hasty words always entered with him. Moving here and there while he spoke, he exclaimed, 'Well, well, signora, the world might be turned upside down without your finding it out! Here am I come home expressly to bring you news, and you do not so much as ask what it is!'

'Tell me now, then,' said the wife, as he paused and gave her for the first time an opportunity of speaking. 'Is it good?'

'You must divine, signora, you must divine, I say. Come, come, make haste!'

'You have seen Signora Olivetti? She has heard from her husband?'

'Signora Olivetti go to Jerusalem! and her husband too! Stay, stay, stay; now I think of it, I want to invite the signora and the little one to spend the evening with us. Immediately — where is Bernardo? Yes, we must have the bride here this evening. I mean to settle when the wedding is to be — Luigi will be coming home, eh?'

His wife looked up now, a flush rising to her cheeks. Till now she had worn an absent, patient look; her thoughts were elsewhere; it was an effort to listen to her husband. Now there was life, interest, agitation. He observed the difference.

'Ah, she lives now! See! one would think she expected that young good-for-nought of a son of hers to rise through the floor! Why, you do not expect him yet, eh?'

'What do you know about Luigi, signor?' she asked, pressing her hand on her throat where the pulses were beating visibly.

'Why, do you suppose I have seen him in the Corso?'

'It would be too much happiness,' she answered, with a deep, self-reproachful sigh, as the ever-haunting fear that her maternal affection was excessive, arose as usual. 'I love him too well, it binds me to the world.'

'Folly!' said Signor Ravelli, out of patience; 'does Heaven

give you affections expressly that you may renounce them? Too much happiness! Why so? Why should I not see him if he is here?'

'But is he? Tell me, I beseech you; I must know!' said she, rising hastily with joined hands.

Signor Ravelli was delighted. 'How ——' he began again, when the door was partially opened, and a voice said with feigned formality, 'I am here to incommode the honorable signora.'

She turned abruptly with a cry of 'Ah, Heaven, it is he!' and would have actually fallen with joy and surprise if Luigi had not sprung in and clasped her in his arms. Mother and son embraced as if they could not bear to let each other go, and it was some minutes before Signor Ravelli, who walked round them, fuming and laughing, could obtain a fair view of Luigi, whose delinquencies he had quite forgotten. 'What a barbarian it is! What will his bride say?' he exclaimed, regarding him joyously when the first agitation was past and mother and son sat together, Signora Ravelli's trembling hands clasped in Luigi's, her eyes greedily perusing his face, and his fondly studying her countenance, while he gave an outline of his many adventures, with much more mirth and enjoyment than penitence, or even regret for the failure of the campaign. Between each pause Signor Ravelli ejaculated something about Imelda; Luigi instantly saw the beseeching look of old days come over his mother's face; and though all that day he had been planning a meeting with Gemma Clementi, he could not grieve father or mother by betraying any reluctance to meet Imelda; besides, he was so happy to be at home again, that he would have kissed a stone if he had heard that it came from a Roman wall. 'And when the wedding?' broke in Signor Ravelli again. 'We must cage this wild hawk now we have got him back. Ah, you young scapegrace, we have kept that sugar-cake, that little bunch of violets safe for you — when shall it be, eh?'

'When the fighting is over, perhaps, my father!'

'Fighting, fighting? what fighting?' demanded Signor Ravelli, fiercely, gathering his eyebrows together.

'What are we here for? We were told that France and Spain, Austria and Naples, were combining to restore Pio Nono.'

'Ah, my son, what a sin has been committed towards the Holy Father!' sighed his mother.

'Old women's tales,' replied Signor Ravelli.

'What are we here for, then?' repeated Luigi.

'To amuse the people, I suppose; a fine show for them you are, you rascals. Have you not a respectable uniform among you? And where are the rest of you? Garibaldi is not come.'

'He will be here to-morrow. You are very much mistaken, signor, if you think there is no fighting in prospect — nothing but play. I recommend the Provisionary Government to look to the gates and the walls.'

'You recommend, forsooth? Do you hear how this young cock crows, signora? What do fair-weather, toy-soldiers like you volunteers know about it?'

Luigi looked at his father in utter surprise. To one who knew what the volunteers had endured, this jesting tone was a shock. He answered, with unusual gravity,

'If sleeping on the bare ground, being half-starved, and risking life fifty times a day, is to be a fair-weather soldier, we are such. Have all the Roman volunteers returned safe, signor?'

'Ah, the poor Cardellas!' said his mother. 'Their old father, Luigi!'

Luigi's eyes were full of tears as memory recalled to him the long list of dead whom he had known and loved. He rose hastily.

'Whither away now, young sir?' demanded his father, with imperiousness more assumed than real, for the thought of the childless old man had moved him also.

'To see Nota. I hear he is at Palazzo Clementi. I have not seen him since I helped to carry him to a wagon, more dead than alive.'

'You will stay here, *signor mio*. Nota is safe and well, and can wait, and we shall have visitors presently.'

Luigi pressed his mother's hands fondly, rose, made an arch and resolute bow to his father, and had bounded down the stairs almost before Signor Ravelli realized what he was about. The father stood looking after him from a window, half laughing, half storming, and in fact enjoying the feeling that his unmanageable

son had returned to enliven the dull house. He turned when the light figure was out of sight, to address his wife, but she had vanished into her own room; and, when he opened the door he saw her on her knees, her face upraised to the crucifix on the wall, with such a rapture of joyful tears, that he was silenced and withdrew softly; a strange mournful feeling taking possession of him for a few moments, he hardly knew what; but an impatience of the passionless, monotonous life he led with her, a perception that she had deep affections which were all sealed to him, all given to Heaven and her son. He got rid of it after a time, and returned to his old well-satisfied belief, that women were only grown-up children, who must be watched and kept by force out of mischief, and that the very best of them was not capable of being a friend and companion to the dullest man in the world.

Luigi soon reached Palazzo Clementi, meeting on the way Colonel de Crillon. They lifted their hats as they passed each other in sign of acquaintance; and 'A fine young fellow,' crossed the mind of the Frenchman; while, 'I should like to know what that man's business is here,' glanced across Luigi's. He stumbled the next instant upon his own lieutenant, humming a line of Irene's song, and gazing round him with great interest on the mighty city hitherto known to him only by name.

'Ha, Fava! you here? better lodgings here than on Monte Suelo!' cried Luigi, as he passed.

'Not likely to blow away as yours did, into the valley of the Chiese, captain!' returned the other, pointing to the massive walls of Palazzo Clementi, under whose archway Ravelli was disappearing. He paused as he sprang up the broad staircases, and cast glowing looks towards the apartment of the contessa, revolving once more the possibility of a visit there that evening. But he dared not trust himself nor Gemma in an unexpected meeting. While he stood devouring the windows with his eager eyes, the outer door opened; two ladies appeared in opera cloaks — Gemma and her aunt going to a party. The latter was speaking, the other following, with a pale, discontented, listless face. Luigi made a spring towards them; Gemma saw him, uttered a half-smothered cry, the blood rushed scarlet to her cheeks, she

was absolutely transformed with joy, but her aunt was too much engrossed in recognising and questioning Luigi to observe her or to guess what was expressed in the quick look exchanged between them.

'You are going to Signor Nota,' said she, when her curiosity was satisfied; 'we will not detain you, then; but you come to us to-morrow evening, is it not so? even in these sad times we have our usual *società*. Come, Gemma. Why, it is a wild beast! what a costume, what a black beard! Should you have known him, child?' she asked when they were out of his hearing; and Gemma, palpitating all over with joy, replied, 'Oh, assuredly not, dear aunt.'

'You look all the better for the surprise,' said her aunt, looking at her; 'it has given you a certain color; I was afraid you were losing all your beauty. You are growing really old; you are twenty-two and still unmarried; it is a scandal; you had better make up the Bible with some one!'

'Here is the New Testament, if you will find the Old,' returned Gemma, between mirth and scorn, as her aunt quoted for the hundredth time to her that proverbial expression for a marriage between an old man and a girl, which in its irreverent satire is no bad specimen of what Roman wit usually is.

'We are worse off than ever now that monsignore is gone. These atrocious republicans.'

Luigi had watched them out of sight, exultant in his good fortune, and then betook himself to Vincenzo's apartments. How familiar was everything around — the long corridors overlooking the quadrangle, the orange-trees in tubs, the range of wall-flowers and stocks in pots on the highest story; nay, even the network which confined Madama Cecchi's hens claimed a look from him — all these well-known objects made the experiences of the past year seem strangely visionary to him. Closing his eyes as he waited for admittance, he recalled the night-watch on the hill-side, the leafy cabin that had sheltered him, the wide landscape on which his eyes had looked for so many weary days from the Bergamasc hills. He seemed almost to hear the swift river rushing past burnt and deserted villages, and winding through the valley towards the majestic mountains in the distance; the

sentinels' call came to his ear, the groups that lay round the watch-fires with song and jest appeared before him; the bustle around the humble stable which served as head-quarters; stars glittered overhead, wind howled among the trees, foretelling a tempest. Luigi hastily opened his eyes and looked round with a start, fearful lest his vision should be reality, and Rome still be divided from him by half the Peninsula. Menica opened the door at this moment, and her pretty face was an agreeable assurance that he was indeed in Rome.

'Why, 'tis he! Fie, signor!' she cried, remonstratingly, but not very angrily, as he took the readiest way of testifying that it really was himself.

'For once, pretty one! I am a soldier, you know, and soldiers have certain privileges — you are more of a rose of May than ever! Is Signor Mori at home? and your master and the padrona?' said Luigi, entering Vincenzo's room, while Menica retired to the kitchen, laughing and shaking her head, pausing and looking after him, while he cried, '*A rivederti!* there is no day in the week like the *Domenica* [Sunday]. Here I am, Vincenzo!'

'Welcome, indeed,' cried Vincenzo, glad but not surprised, as of course Irene had reported her encounter at Santa Chiara. 'At last! Let me look at you. Are you glad to see us again, friend?'

Luigi's dancing eyes answered the question. Irene came out of her room to welcome him again. She looked sad, and he remarked it.

'I have just had a note from Madame Marriotti to tell me that she leaves Rome to-morrow,' said Irene; 'I expected it; but she says I am not to go and wish her good-bye; it would only distress us both too much.'

'Madame Marriotti!' repeated Luigi, with a sort of perplexity; 'I declare to you I feel as a ghost might do who revisited the world after years and years of absence. I have lived so utterly in a different world this last year, that I can't come back to yours, where I find you speaking and acting as if nothing had happened! I am ready at every moment to order a tree to be

cut down for firing; and when I saw Fava just now, I nearly told him to send out a party to lasso an ox for supper.'

'Lasso? are you a wild Indian?'

'The commander-in-chief is,' replied Luigi, laughing; 'and from what some of the men who came with him say, I suppose we are all much like a war-party in America.'

'The Spaniards call us *Caraïbes* already!' said Vincenzo.

'Devoted thanks to them! When? why?'

'You have heard of their proclamation?'

'Not I. Are they helping to cook the broth at Gaeta?'

'All Europe seems combining against us, and England deserts us,' said Irene.

'Let them come, then. The day has no flavor without a little fighting in it. But my father scorned the notion of a siege.'

'It is impossible, is it not?' cried Irene; 'Pio Nono is too good, too gentle to hire foreign bayonets against his own people; he will not return to Rome through a breach in its walls!'

'As for his words, if they are roses, they will blossom; if they are thorns, they will prick,' said Vincenzo; 'he speaks roses, but they prick strangely, Irene!'

'"Heaven keep us from one who kisses us before, and claws us behind,"' quoted Luigi.

'There is a party who mock at the idea of a siege,' continued Vincenzo; 'but that will not prevent it; and, if it come, I shall almost rejoice, for we shall show the world that we can resist unanimously, and are not the mere republican faction they take us for.'

'Hum — I actually do not know what politics are in the ascendant.'

'Tending towards a republic, since all our overtures to Gaeta are rejected.'

'Why! you would not have the priests back!'

'No,' said Vincenzo, emphatically; 'only under certain conditions.'

'Rather Mazzini!' added Irene.

'Are there any priests left? What has become of Monsignore Clementi?'

'Fled, it is said. It would be at the risk of his life, if he

showed himself here. The people are furious against the priests, especially the Jesuits, because they hinder all attempts at conciliation at Gaeta, but we have Padre Rinaldi and Ugo Bassi and others, and Leone is fully employed.'

'What does he think of things?'

Vincenzo shook his head. 'Ill.'

'And Cecchi?'

Irene shivered and looked away. Vincenzo, who did not know half as much about Cecchi as she did, answered readily, 'We see nothing of him now; he shuts himself up alone when he is indoors — he is strangely morose. And his wife — she has taken a devout turn!'

'No!' cried Luigi, with a hearty laugh.

'It is too serious to laugh at,' said Irene; 'she declares that a vision of her patron saint appeared to her, and threatened her with unimaginable tortures, unless she should repent and convert her husband; and ever since she has been perfectly miserable, though the old spirit breaks out still sometimes, and I think some great event would rouse her again. It is such abject superstition! I think all fear and no love is as bad in religion as in government — only fit for slaves.'

'Leone! I hear his step,' said Vincenzo.

'I knew it was he before you did!' said Ravelli, who had seen Irene's eyes brighten.

Leone had not been at home since the morning, and therefore was not aware of the return of his friend. As he caught sight of the guest, the sudden, bright Italian smile flashed across his dark face, and his welcome was full of the warmest affection. But Luigi was startled by the worn and serious look that soon settled on his face; the weariness stamped on it so unlike the old, vivid, changing expression. It made the light-hearted soldier realize, as he had never yet done, how much had been won and lost again in the past year. His trade had been fighting, and, beyond beating the Austrians and devising hare-brained expeditions, he had concerned himself little of late with anything, risking his life a dozen times a day as much in frolic as in patriotism. The hardships of his volunteer life had neither saddened nor sobered him. When the disastrous end of the campaign forced

Durando to retreat into Piedmont, Luigi had rejected the armistice and joined Garibaldi, and had Garibaldi been forced to lay down his arms, Luigi would no doubt have offered to serve in the battalion of Bersaglieri which young Manara was forming in Piedmont. He had come gaily to Rome with his company, rejoiced to see it again, but without ever reflecting what the consequences of a siege would be. It was far otherwise with those who stood apart, watching public events, and a new view of them was given to him by the eager conversation that followed Leone's appearance.

Leone accompanied him when he left Palazzo Clementi, asking many questions. After their parting Ravelli dwelt long on the changed aspect of his friend, which hardly brightened even at Irene's side, and found himself looking round and calculating the possibility of a successful defence. Mentally he surveyed the points of probable attack, slackened his pace and mused, wondering whether any real preparations had been made. 'I would wager there is nothing but flags and flowers and tricolored cockades,' thought he contemptuously, enlightened by his experience of actual warfare, which had taught him to disdain all the noisy demonstrations that had formerly seemed to him like substantial success. 'But who is there to besiege us? The Neapolitans? Pshaw! Poor wretches who are dragged out to fight with their pockets full of charms and rosaries? France? Surely one republic will not attack another? French honor is not sunk to that! Austria — perhaps! Why the very babies would stand up to fight the Croats — what is that old story Leone spoke of — some rascally king whom thirty cities leagued to bring back to Rome — we shall see!'

He entered Casa Ravelli while still plunged in thought unusually deep for him, and was recalled to other things by the voices that reached his ear; his father's banter, his mother's soft tones, and the grave voice of Signora Olivetti. One other he listened for and heard not — but Imelda was there. She was by his mother's side, watching intently for his step, full of tremulous joy that made her forget how wearily the days had passed without him, and brought a haze of tears into the soft dark eyes that glanced up shyly and lovingly when her betrothed husband entered.

All rose to welcome him; his mother's supplicating look was irresistible; and he could not meet Imelda merely with a cold formal greeting, but as that fierce ardent face of Gemma's rose before him, he inly vowed that come what would, this cruel entanglement must end. But for a little while it must continue; he could not spend his first evening at home in discord, nor greet Imelda by informing her that their engagement must end. And he might well be reluctant to introduce any jarring topics — home was so pleasant, the company of women so agreeable after his late life! How wild and adventurous it sounded, told as they all sat together — what a change from the tempest-swept hillside! Imelda listened silently, trembling as she heard of sallies upon the enemy, excursions in disguise into villages held by the Austrians, of swimming across the wild torrent of the Caffaro, and of videttes close to the enemy, who hung or shot every volunteer they could get hold of. How she sympathized with the young Milanese who, seeing himself cut off from his regiment, tore the flag he bore and hid the pieces in his breast, that they might escape the enemy, whatever might become of him! How she rejoiced when he reappeared safely three days afterwards! All anxiety had vanished; she had a most entire and childlike belief that all must go well now that Luigi was come.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

O révolutions! J'ignore,
Moi, le moindre des matelots
Ce que Dieu dans l'ombre élabore
Sous le tumulte de vos flots.
— cette tempête est lourde,
Aux princes comme aux nations.
Oh! quelle mer aveugle et sourde
L'un peuple en révolutions!

VICTOR HUGO.

RAVELLI for once was steadfast in his purpose. After an evening spent with the Clementi, during which he could only exchange a few hurried words apart with Gemma, and felt himself a very Tantalus during the hours which he passed in company with her, yet separated from her by all the barriers of rank and ceremony, he made up his mind to confess his love to the count, whose eye had been on them the whole time. He asked Clementi to take a turn with him in the corridor, and his hurried manner was so unlike his usual gay and dashing carriage, that it already half betrayed him.

They lighted their cigars and walked up and down, Clementi coolly waiting, and making now and then some slight remark, to which Luigi assented without knowing what he said. He could hardly fear a repulse from the young patrician who had a hundred times mocked at his own title, and had long ago thrown himself into the foremost rank of Red Republicanism, yet so strongly were different ranks divided in Rome, that the rich plebeian, even in those democratic days, felt as if he were offering an affront to the noble, impoverished Clementi by aspiring to the hand of their daughter. He could tell nothing which the count's

lynx eye had not seen long before, but a slight shade of surprise appeared on the young noble's face, and he answered Luigi's declaration in the full soft tones which could convey, when he willed it, the keenest sting, 'Of *my* sentiments you cannot doubt;' and Luigi, instantly remembering that he had the approval of several other people to gain, stopped short, and gave him time to add with a careless smile, 'I am sorry for that pretty little *sposa* of yours. Did she take it much to heart?'

'You are the first person to whom I have spoken,' Luigi answered, with more anger than he could explain to himself.

'You do not imagine that I suppose you have spoken to my sister? How can you figure to yourself that I could so suspect my friend? or my sister? I trust your honor as my own!' exclaimed Clementi, ingeniously misunderstanding Luigi's words, and assuming an aggrieved air. 'You wrong me indeed. Besides, I know that she would instantly have told me.'

Luigi was completely out of countenance, feeling as if he were a thorough villain, and unable to make the confession which sprang to his lips, since it would inculpate Gemma. He colored deeply, passed his hand impatiently over his forehead and was dumb, while the count's dark grey eye watched him with inward amusement. It was a cat playing with a mouse; Luigi at was no time a match for the keen, clear intellect of Clementi, and least of all now, when he was smitten through and through by these slender, stinging arrows, from which he had no possible way of escape. Count Clementi resumed: 'If indeed your father consents, and the Olivetti give up their claims, I can only ——' He paused, and Luigi answered almost against his will,

'It was to you that I determined to speak first.'

'Do you mean that your relations do not know of this?'

'Exactly,' said Luigi, fast losing his temper.

'Then in fact you are still engaged to the Olivetti?'

'That engagement shall be broken the instant you give me your consent.'

'But, till it is!' said the count, in his most melodious accents, 'till it is, my friend!' and the intonation conveyed a delicate reproach which said, 'Can you expect an honorable man like

myself to promise my sister to the betrothed husband of another, and without the knowledge of his family.'

If Luigi were not acute, he was generous and honorable, and detested double-dealing, though he had been led deeply into it by Gemma's all-powerful influence. He perfectly understood Clementi's unuttered meaning, took his hand and said, 'You are right, and I am wrong. No more of this now;' and though they parted without one atom of a promise having been extracted from Clementi, Luigi was convinced of his sympathy, and heartily ashamed of having laid himself open to such a reproach as his friend had mildly implied. Clementi remained pacing up and down the corridor. A very peculiar smile came to his lips as Luigi left him, and he murmured to himself an old distich:

'Il mondo, di Noè gli è proprio l'arca
Di bestie assai, di poche uomini carca!'

'But truly I find even more fools than knaves in it; or men who are half fool, half knave, and then they are yet more easy to manage!'

Luigi returning home late, found that his father had been asleep for hours; so that he was forced to delay the explanation until morning, but he firmly resolved that not another day should pass without one. A great desire to consult his mother came upon him, but he refrained, feeling as if it were a sin to trouble her calm existence with his feverish, stormy hopes and fears; and moreover should he draw her into the business, she might be made to suffer for it. Luigi foresaw a tempest, and knew it would be safer to be able to say she knew nothing of his wishes.

While Luigi, with a clouded brow, was revolving these thoughts the next morning, a messenger reached him from Garibaldi, who had only a few hours since arrived in Rome. The indefatigable general had already formed a scheme for taking up his headquarters at Rieti, which he intended to fortify, and remembering that Captain Ravelli had been educated as an engineer, he summoned him to hold counsel over the plan, made rapid notes of his observations, and ordered him off instantly to survey the old classic town, the Queen of the Sabine land, as its inhabitants

sometimes proudly called it, built at the foot of mountains, in a rich plain full of vineyards. The swift Velino rushes by the town, which is a nest of quaint red-roofed houses, guarded by several towers and a citadel. No more joyous spot is there on earth than Rieti in the vintage season, when all the population swarm forth from their hive to gather in the rich purple and amber clusters and heap them into wagons drawn by great meek-eyed oxen, or pile them in panniers on the backs of asses, which the children have crowned with leafy garlands snatched from the vines. Half-naked boys, graceful as fauns and brown as satyrs, perch themselves in the trees to which the vines cling, and throw down the grapes with jest and song to the laughing girls below: matrons in picturesque red bodice and snowy headgear superintend; children frolic round and steal grapes; spare and swarthy men complete the scene, and over all is a turquoise sky — radiant sunshine — everywhere laughter and song!

But in winter Rieti assumes a wilder aspect; sudden storms dash upon it and turn the clear Velino into a roaring torrent which sweeps wildly away all that falls on its surface, and tears at the banks as if it would drag them down after the large stones that it rolls along its bed. Rieti was rather in its winter than its summer aspect when Garibaldi resolved to establish himself there, though seldom had so exquisitely sunny and mild a season been known as the winter of '49; but summer or winter made little difference to the hardy chief, all whose plans were promptly conceived, and as promptly executed. No officer of his dreamed of delay or hesitation, and though never did orders come to Luigi at a less welcome time, he did not attempt to steal a moment for private affairs, and could only hurry to Palazzo Clementi to tell Vincenzo of his destination, with a hope that the news might reach Gemma and explain his disappearance. He bade his mother remember that he was only going fourteen miles from Rome, and comforted himself as he rode off with the thought that he should soon find an opportunity of returning for a day or two.

In this however he was entirely mistaken. His active commander employed him ceaselessly, and not only Luigi, but every one of the 2000 volunteers whom the honored name of Garibaldi

soon called together, was continually occupied. Rieti was fortified; and the troops drilled, disciplined, and inured to forced marches, exposure and hardships, which taught them that war was no game to be met as a gay band of picadors encounter a fierce bull in an arena, with fair ladies sitting round to 'rain influence and judge the prize,' but a stern and formidable thing, requiring patient endurance, as well as the lofty enthusiasm which brings volunteers together and makes them capable of sudden, daring enterprises, but which is apt to flag and repine during inaction and expectation.

1849 came amid increasing gloom. In spite of the absence of the Pope, the Christmas ceremonies were taking place, but the lower classes missed the usual magnificent pomp, and innumerable timid and scrupulous consciences were racked by fears that Heaven's anger must rest on the city that had frightened away the Pope; while others, though not troubled by scruples of conscience, looked forward to the future with dismay, and trembled at the possibility of war thundering at their very doors. Sicily was still struggling single-handed, fiercely but despairingly, with Naples; Venice held out, imploring succor from Piedmont, where Charles Albert was gathering his forces for a new campaign. Rome once more contributed largely to the war, but not with the exultant spirit in which she had lavished men and money in 1848. Now it was with stern self-devotion, full of foreboding, and more as a sign of adherence to the cause of Italy than with the expectation of success. Forebodings how soon realized! On the 30th of March the armistice between Austria and Piedmont expired; Charles Albert had marched to the village of La Cava, near the confluence of the Po and the Ticino. Thither Radetsky advanced to meet him. The old fate pursued the Italian arms; mistakes, treachery, and misfortune seemed to combine against them; a defeat was sustained at La Cava; and then came to Rome the tidings of Novara. Novara! what unutterable anguish and despair is contained in that fatal name! What Italian lips can speak it calmly? All ended with that day. Countless lives had been thrown away, a fair land laid waste by fire and sword, hearths made desolate for ever; all the stormy passions let loose which, though seas of blood be poured

upon them, are not quenched, but burst out again and again. The tidings were to Rome like the shock of an earthquake. Close upon them followed the abdication of Charles Albert. The campaign was already ended, and North Italy, with her soil soaked with the blood of her best and bravest, sank again into the hands of Austria.

And meanwhile, since the Court at Gaeta would listen to no propositions, but ceaselessly protested, called on the powers of Europe for aid, and schemed for an unconditional return, a new step became necessary at Rome, and a republic was at last proclaimed. It was directed by a Triumvirate, consisting of Salicetti, Montecchi, and Armellini. Mazzini and Gaffi soon replaced the two first. The Mazzinian faction was but small, but a settled government had become all-important, for disorder was fast gaining ground; several convents had been pillaged, much violence displayed, and the feeling of hostility towards the clergy as a body was intense, though personally many were popular. The strong hands of the triumvirate checked the growing anarchy; the moderate liberals knew well it was no time to protest against the new form of government, but looked on mournfully, and regarded the pomp and demonstration with which the republic was proclaimed from the Capitol with something like contempt. Such of the clergy as had remained in Rome could not keep or accept office under the republic consistently with their duty to the Pope. They resigned their posts, but for the most part they made no public protests, and went on their way quietly, working, as Padre Rinaldi had said, while it was yet day, but with heavy hearts, for the path of duty was hard to see, and the night was closing in already. Unhappily, not all conducted themselves thus discreetly; there were friars who came and went and played the spy in disguise, emissaries from Gaeta to those of the Pope's party who were still, openly or secretly, in Rome. Wherever they appeared discord sprang up, and the popular feeling towards them was made on several occasions fearfully manifest.

The new government might well have its hands full of work. It had an extensive territory to rule, corrupted by old abuses, innumerable offices to fill, formerly occupied by ecclesiastics who

had resigned them (and men had to be found capable of filling them), the finances were exhausted, everything was in a transition state; all that Pio Nono had found it impossible to deal with was now thrown on them; add to this, enemies were crowding without the walls of Rome and corresponding with enemies within. That the republic should have done all it effected is no small praise; what it would have accomplished had the play been played out none now can say. Well had it been if the Romans had been allowed to try a little longer whether they could govern themselves.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright;
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.

* * * * * *

I wis, in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.

MACAULAY.

ON the morning of April 26th, two steamers slowly entered the port of Cività Vecchia. The sea was unquiet — that smiling, treacherous Mediterranean! there had been rough weather for several days, and the two vessels had been detained in their progress from Porto Fino; the passengers, who had suffered severely, were standing crowded together on the decks, casting eager looks towards the land and the town, which rose up all around the old port, and glittered in the sunlight. They were all soldiers, all Italians, some 600 men. There were deserters from Austrian regiments, to whom death anywhere was preferable to falling into the hands of the Croats. These were mostly bronzed and bearded men, of mature age. Others on board had not seen their twentieth year — the boy heroes of Milan, who had escaped from their colleges in the famous *'Cinq Giornad'* which freed her, and became soldiers by instinct. They had seen hard service since; they were all exiles now — the poor remains of the Lombard Bersaglieri, on their way to Rome. Conspicuous among the groups on the deck of the largest steamer was a remarkably handsome young man, who seemed to be some twenty-four summers old; his broad hat and plume shaded bright dark eyes, and a sweet, finely cut mouth, half concealed by a

dark beard. He wore the cross of Savoy, and a tricolored ribbon was fastened on the breast of his uniform. He was pointing out the different objects in the view to his companions, clustered round him with an affectionate deference which marked him, in spite of his youth, as their leader. And in fact he was Luciano Manara, the hero of heroes in the Five Days; the first to strike a blow on Ponte Tosa; the gallant commander of the volunteers. Beside him was his secretary, Count Emilio Dandolo, several years younger than himself, who had shared the perils of both campaigns with him; Enrico Dandolo, a tall, slender, near-sighted youth, was on his other hand, a scholar who had thrown down the pen for the sword; and leaning against Count Dandolo was a lad still younger, whose gladsome, gentle features and caressing manner had something so feminine and attractive in them that none could wonder that young Emilio Morosini was the darling of the whole company.

As the steamers advanced nearer to the land, a considerable commotion was observable in the town, and suddenly Manara's eyes kindled, as with an exclamation he directed the attention of his companions to a number of frigates which had not long before entered the harbor, and were slowly disembarking troops. There was a kind of universal low cry of 'The French!' on board both the steamers; a silence followed, full of expectation and displeasure. The sight of those fourteen frigates boded no good to Rome.

The strength of Cività Vecchia was all outside show; she made no effort to prevent the French from landing; her dismay and doubt were mute; General Oudinot quietly took possession of the place, and when Enrico Dandolo was despatched to him, as a matter of form, with a request that the volunteers might disembark, he returned an absolute refusal. Manara listened to the message with incredulity; then, with a scornful smile, said, 'I should really like to hear that myself;' and he went on shore to demand an audience of the French general, who professed to have come simply to mediate between the Pope and his subjects, and inaugurated his arrival by so singular a step. The cutting irony with which Manara requested an explanation of his refusal did not propitiate the general, already at a loss how

decently to explain his conduct. 'What have Lombards to do with Roman affairs?' he asked angrily.

'And pray, General, what have gentlemen from Paris to do with them?' retorted Manara, and the discussion waxed hot and hotter, in spite of the intervention of the Governor of Cività Vecchia; Oudinot seeking to extort Manara's promise to remain neutral, Manara haughtily refusing to pledge himself one way or the other to the foreigner who dictated to Italians on Italian soil. Meanwhile the tempest-tossed soldiers crowded together on board the steamers were growing momentarily more impatient to land, and when a rumor of Oudinot's refusal reached them they broke into such furious indignation, that in a little while they would have been actually swimming to shore, permission or no permission, had not Manara returned. He was still quivering with excitement and anger from his encounter with Oudinot, but conqueror in a measure, for he had succeeded in gaining leave to disembark at Porto d'Anzo — once the classic Antium; and thither the steamers instantly proceeded.

The last few weeks had been spent in feverish activity at Rome. Many there still believed that the French would not interfere except by diplomacy, and counted confidently on the honor and sympathy of France; but others pointed to past events, reminded their fellow-citizens of Napoleon and Venice, and supported Avezzana, the Minister of War, in all his preparations. It was known that the Neapolitan army was preparing to march on Rome, and none could tell what the next movement of the victorious Austrians might be. Garibaldi had left Rieti, and fixed his quarters in Rome, at the convent of San Pietro in Montorio, whence the monks were obliged to go, and take refuge in the Capitol, a less exposed residence. The city was awaiting with a sort of incredulous expectation the appearance of the French; and the preparations for a siege formed a new excitement and diversion to the citizens, to whom any new thing was always welcome, whether a procession or an execution. Now, at all events, if never before, Rome was united. So hated was the ecclesiastical government, that men of every shade of political opinion combined against its restoration; whether Mazzini should rule or not, had become for the time utterly indiffer-

ent; resistance, as long as a man was left to fight, was the universal resolve, especially if Pio Nono were to be brought back by foreign allies. Yet, while there was a ceaseless buzz and stir of preparation throughout the city, the shops were all open, friends met as usual. Though barricades made several streets impassable, and uniforms abounded as once the clerical habit had done, it was almost impossible to believe that in the nineteenth century a siege was at hand; it sounded like a tale of the Middle Ages to speak of the siege of Rome! Once before had the City of the Seven Hills been assaulted by a French general; she was destined to see another advance against her.

Tidings of the French at Cività Vecchia, of the reception which the Bersaglieri had met with, flew to Rome, and when after a weary march across the scorching Campagna, from Albano, in that almost unparalleled hot spring weather, they entered Rome on the 29th, the whole city poured out to meet them with frantic applause, and to look on those who had delivered Milan, and faced all the hardships in 1848 and 1849, of which the Romans had heard through their own volunteers. Something of a smile appeared on the faces of the Bersaglieri as the throng flocked round them and filled the air with acclamations; but martial discipline prevailed, and they entered the city without making any response to the crowd, who, suddenly chilled by conduct so unlike their own beloved and noisy demonstrations on every occasion, grew silent, and gazed after them with wonder and displeasure. Avezzana passed the Lombards in review before they entered their quarters, where the wearied soldiers longed heartily to be. As the concluding '*Viva Italia!*' burst out, which ended the review, and Manara having thrown off the cares of office for a while, was talking with his companions, two hands were suddenly laid on his shoulders, and a voice cried, 'Well, major! not cut to pieces yet? Welcome to Rome!' and turning, he recognised Ravelli, whom he had known well while they both served in Upper Italy. Leone was near, too, a less intimate acquaintance, but well known by his fame as an *improvvisatore* to Manara and the two Dandolos, who came up to join in the recognition. Much was said on all sides in the first few moments; then Luigi asked the true history of the detention at

Città Vecchia. Manara gave it, with comments from Emilio and Enrico Dandolo. Luigi heard with an outbreak of wrath; Leone with startled looks. He was one of those who believed in the French; too generous himself to suspect perfidy in others, he expressed his confidence in them, and Manara replied with one of Alfieri's ironical lines —

'Di libertà maestri i Galli!'

'How do our preparations seem to you?' asked Luigi.

'Too like Milan,' answered Enrico Dandolo, sighing.

'You are right, Enrico,' said Manara, looking round with a clouded brow; 'too many flags, too many shouts, too much play here, friends. It will not work!'

'Wait till evening, and you will see a different scene,' said Leone; 'you will not despise us then; you see us thrown into commotion by your coming. Where are your quarters in the Piazza of St. Peter's? By drum-beat you will see all quiet. Our chief preparations are about that part.'

They went thither, and the Basilica rose for the first time in their lives before the eyes of Manara and his company. But the glorious temple obtained scarcely a glance, for the soldiers' minds were occupied in noting the military preparations which had turned the vast piazza into a camp. Cannon were there; arms were piled at every corner; fires flickered up, round which men were cooking; others sat polishing their arms, or lay stretched on the straw which had been thickly littered down. Porta Angelica was open, and thronged by those going out and in, driving sheep, oxen, and loaded wagons. Batteries had been erected, and both a fine regiment of the line and the Carabineers had their quarters at this point. Two more regiments were located in Piazza Navona; the volunteers held the walls; the National Guard was at its respective quarters. Manara's eye glanced over the scene with satisfaction. Instead of a confused and noisy multitude only, the Lombards soon found they had come amid a noble and resolute people; they smilingly recanted their first hasty judgment, and awaited with cheered and brave hearts what the morrow might bring.

Manara found his way for a little while to Palazzo Clementi, under the guidance of Leone, who was equally desirous of introducing one whom he admired exceedingly to Irene, and of in-

troducing his betrothed to Manara. The attendance at Irene's weekly *società* had been greatly diminished by late events. Foreigners had fled from Rome; many natives, too, were absent; her engagement at the Teatro Regio was closed, and she had as yet avoided making another. Only intimate friends assembled in her *salon*. Clementi and his sister were there; Signor Olivetti came; Luigi appeared for a short time; Madama Cecchi came in, excited out of her late depression by her patriotism, which when fairly roused defied even her spiritual terrors. All these formed an anxious, eager group, asking for information from each other, and reporting whatever had come to their ears on the all-absorbing topic of the French and the Bersaglieri.

The entrance of Leone and Manara caused a great sensation; Irene was proudly presented by Leone to the young leader of the Lombard troops, who looked with admiration at her noble countenance, and then turning to Vincenzo, made friends with him at once, with a manly tenderness and compassion for the invalid, whose bright eyes and smile spoke so cheerful an acceptance of his fate.

The general absorbing thought was put away for a little while by Manara's asking Irene to sing. All were glad to listen and be refreshed by turning away from the harassing, exhausting dwelling on coming events. She took the least warlike song that she knew; she was weary, and had not spirits for a martial one that night, and no doubt all shared in the same feeling, for there was universal silence and a look of quiet gravity on the faces that had glowed so eagerly a little while before. Clementi's eyes were fixed on Irene; for once he was off his guard; for once a doubt of the success of his plans crossed his mind, unaccountable enough, for all seemed progressing to his heart's desire. Manara had leant back with closed eyes, absorbed in the sweet and soothing tones; he looked up suddenly as they ceased, and caught Clementi's gaze on Irene. It betrayed much to him; he met Leone's eyes and smiled, and that smile and glance towards the count suddenly flashed a new light into Leone's mind. He regarded Clementi compassionately, wondered at his own long blindness, and felt that he had often unconsciously caused him acute pain. He trusted his friend's honor as he trusted that of the French!

Luigi had not attempted to speak to Gemma apart, and an angry red glowed on her cheeks. She could not understand his conduct. He had not long returned to Rome, and had been too fully employed in his engineering capacity to have an hour to bestow upon his private affairs. With new but resolute self-command, he refrained from all intercourse with her unknown to her family; he would seek her no more until he could do so openly.

Irene left the piano, and the conversation began again. Vincenzo was pointing to a paragraph in a *Moniteur*, which had somehow reached Rome; Manara looked over him and read aloud, 'France cannot suffer herself to be enfeebled by the rise of a neighboring power from which she derives no advantage.' It was in a speech on the Italian question, and a visible sensation was created by it in the *salon*. One or two voices asserted it to express but the opinion of a small faction; others scornfully declared the French had always been, and always would be, false to Italy, and bitterly alluded to Pio Nono's having called them against his own people. Manara was struck with the hostile vehemence with which Pio Nono was named; Clementi remarked in reply, 'We should welcome him among us if he were about to take possession of one place.'

'Where?'

'The one that awaits him among his predecessors in St. Peter's.'

'The French enter our Rome!' cried Madama Cecchi; 'we will do like the women in Milan first — we will throw our tables, our pianos on their heads! I have filled my bags long ago.'

'And I!' said Signora Olivetti, alluding to the sacks full of earth which each family was expected to furnish to aid in the fortifications.

The acute anguish which shot across Manara's face at the mention of his beloved Milan, the city which he above all had contributed to make free, now lying again in chains, moved Irene deeply.

'Ah, pardon!' she said, as if in apology that it had been named.

'I have children there, whom I may never see again,' replied Manara, simply.

She looked up, surprised that the young soldier should be already married. He smiled, guessing her thoughts, and sitting down by her side, told her in a low voice much about those dear ones whom he could seldom bear to name. Irene's music, the sight of relations living happily together, had charmed him into a softer mood than he could often afford to indulge in. 'Thank Heaven, we shall have some fighting soon!' he exclaimed at last. She looked at him inquiringly. 'Ah, you do not understand,' he said; 'but we exiles must ever be doing something to keep us from feeling how empty our hearts are. Yet even a battle loses half its worth to exiles; to other men victory is the road to peace, to their homes, where the wife, the mother, the children are. To us — no! Yet it is much to strike another blow for Italy!' His fingers played with the tricolored ribbon on his breast.

'You are certain, then, that the French will attack? All the residents here have protested against armed interference on the part of their Government.'

'Most certain, and that before many days are over. Thank Heaven, a way is opened to us in the midst of all the shame and misfortunes which have befallen us, by which we may show at least that we did not deserve them! The truth is, Oudinot is self-deceived; he fancies the city to be oppressed by the small Mazzinian faction and eager to be delivered.'

'Mazzini has few followers, but we have only one thought now, to defend our city.'

'And you have prepared in earnest; I saw houses knocked down, trees felled ——'

'Ah, our ilexes! But the Committee of Public Safety judged it necessary. Yes, half the beauty of Rome has been destroyed; but "poor and free," as some of the people have chalked up on the walls!'

'I wished to ask whether that priest chance to be here who was with your volunteers; I have seen him many times confessing the dying as calmly on the field of battle as if he had been in his own confessional at Rome. It was a tall, spare figure, dark glowing eyes, a stern pale face.'

'Ah, you have not seen him smile, or you would not describe

him thus! Padre Rinaldi. Yes, here, and ever occupied — he and Leone.'

'He does not fear republicans?'

'He has no need. None have who do not glide in disguise from Rome to Gaeta and back, with their wallets full of treason,' said Vincenzo, catching the question. Others heard what he said, and Manara saw that a sensation had been created by his words, which he did not understand. He looked for explanation at Irene.

'Have you not heard?' she asked in a low tone, and shuddering.

'Those two poor wretches!' said Signora Olivetti, drawing nearer.

'Those Jesuits!' said Clementi.

Manara made a sign of negation.

'They were not truly Jesuits,' Irene said, hurriedly; 'it is said not — no one really knows — the people were frantic then from having found out that there was a plot to deliver up the city to the Neapolitans. It was concerted between the Court at Gaeta and some unknown persons here. Papers were seized, but the bearer (a friar) contrived to escape before the contents were understood.'

'After that, every priest in disguise was held a spy, of course?' said Manara.

'Yes, signor; though many are only poor lambs who have put on the robe of a laic from timidity,' said Madama Cecchi.

'A heated horse and a friar unfrocked were never good for aught,' said Clementi, drily.

'Then, one day there were found two men lurking in a vineyard. They said they were vine-dressers, but a cry got abroad that they were spies — Jesuits; it spread like wildfire; the people seemed to swarm up out of the very ground like locusts to seize them. They were beaten, dragged, lacerated; they were forced by this very house, bleeding like an "*Ecce Homo*," in the midst of that furious multitude, who screamed, howled, surged in the streets. I saw the face of one of those two poor wretches. Oh, Heaven, that look!' Irene covered her face with her hands, shuddering all over, and there was a general suppressed movement, but no one spoke till Manara asked, 'And then?'

'They were dragged to the bridge of St. Angelo — it is said one was still alive and shrieked as he was flung into the river. I cannot believe it; I cannot think life would have lasted till then,' answered Irene, falteringly; then casting her hands from her tearful face, she exclaimed, 'Oh, signor, do not judge my Romans by this! You know what a mob is; what tigers the populace always are; but think, we had been all but betrayed, we knew not by whom, and that uncertainty martyrized us doubly! We knew not whom to trust, whom to doubt. You cannot guess what wreck, what desolation the unconditional return of Pio Nono would bring — there would be such vengeance as would make the streets run blood! Oh! all Rome has lamented that deed; we ask Heaven every day on our knees to forgive it.'

'It was an evil deed, much like those of the Croats,' replied Manara, thinking of horrible scenes which he had witnessed in Milan; 'but not like theirs, done in cold blood.'

'The pillage of convents was another objectionable action,' said Clementi, with a glance at Madama Cecchi, whose alternate patriotism and piety infinitely amused him.

'Yes, signor,' said she, very sharply; 'it was a bad action, and the republic has put a stop to it. It was infamous to see the rabble strutting in holy copes and albes, and velvet and silks on which they had laid their unsanctified fingers; silks worth many *scudi* a yard, such as we never have been able to buy for our church in this parish. When I think of it my heart sinks as if I had been following my mother's funeral!'

'What do you say to the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and the carrying off of bells from the churches to make cannon, signora?'

'I say it was a good action, a holy action; all done to defend one's country is holy, Signor Conte; and as for the bells, I say blessed be the Government, for I was daily awakened by the one for early mass at the little church yonder.'

'Ah, dear signora! what blasphemies you are talking!' said Clementi, and the padrona's face fell, but the patriotic spirit triumphed again.

'No, signor, pardon me; it seems to me that no one will be shut out of Holy Paradise for loving his country.'

'We are expecting Padre Rinaldi this evening,' said Irene to Manara, who had risen to go; 'you will stay for his coming?'

He willingly sat down again, and she told him of several colleges and museums which Padre Rinaldi had saved from the populace by his remonstrances, in the disorderly days before the Provisionary Government was well established, when the whole city was like a seething cauldron. 'But to him they ever listen,' she said; 'and if he had been at hand before the tumult grew such that no single voice could be heard, those two had not been massacred!'

He entered soon after, and was instantly surrounded by the assembled guests, eager to hear all he said. The mournful, austere look which he had worn of late had given place to a cheerful expression; all he said encouraged those who were gathered there, the defenders of Rome. Madama Cecchi was wonderfully inspirited by his tone, and forgot for some time that her confessor assured her — though he was a good man and loved Italy, after all — that Providence was against Rome.

The few words which Rinaldi spoke kindled new fire in the hearts of all the men there; they felt now, not only resolute to die on the walls, if needful — *that* they had been all along — but inspired with hope that Rome might resist successfully. On one brow alone no flush came; no spark lighted in the dark grey eye; Count Clementi listened with an artificial, assenting smile, but his powers of dissimulation drooped and failed before the eagle glance of the priest, who, he knew, saw through him as no one else had ever done; doubted him, but could not yet convict him. In his presence Clementi could never assume enthusiasm. While he listened apparently to what was passing, his mind reverted to the awful tale of which Irene had attempted an outline, and he felt a cold creeping chill as he reflected how deeply he himself had been concerned in the plot which had exasperated the Romans.

Those papers had been coming to him! What if his agent had not escaped — had betrayed him? And while his mind was thus engaged, his sister's was as busy in another direction. To her the siege was nothing; the state of Italy a trifle; the whole world for her was contained in Ravelli — Ravelli who was gone

with an ardent look towards her, but no more! She sat apart, biting her full red lip, her face clouding tempestuously; she was indifferent to everything now, and impatient to take leave, since he was gone. On her, too, fell the eye of Padre Rinaldi; her secret was no secret to him; he looked pityingly on her for a moment, then gave a glance at her brother which seemed to read his very soul, and he felt as if he were detected, about to be proclaimed aloud a traitor, and could only by a great effort maintain his haughty composure. To Irene, Padre Rinaldi turned with a very different air; she and Leone were two who refreshed him in his daily strife with the world; those eyes that never feared to meet his; that noble brow and sweet smile of hers told, he knew, a tale as frank and sincere as if she had been owning her inmost feelings at a confessional. The heretic Irene was dear to him as if she had been his child — she and her lover, the young poet whose nature would have bidden him lie on Hymettus watching the amethyst and rosy lights kiss its marbles, and listening to the bees humming all day long in its thyme — but who had sacrificed his leisure, his life, his best hopes to his country. Leone and Irene were the two whom Padre Rinaldi loved best in the world; they had found a home in that visionary, austere heart of his which seemed all devoted to his Church and his country.

Manara was forced to go at last, though he would fain have stayed.

'You will look on our house as your own,' Vincenzo said to him as they parted, and Irene's smile enforced the invitation.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Alors tout se leva. L'homme, l'enfant, la femme,
Quiconque avait un bras, quiconque avait un âme,
Tout vint, tout accourut. Et la ville à grand bruit
Sur les lourds bataillons se rua jour et nuit.
En vain boulets, obus, la balle et les mitrailles;
De la vieille cité dechiraient les entrailles —
Et de son râle affreux ameutant les faubourgs;
Le tocsin haletant bondissait dans les tours.

VICTOR HUGO.

SLEEP hovered somewhat shily over many pillows that night, but morning broke without any new events, and the Romans could rise and laugh half scornfully at the fears and expectation that had been excited in vain. Irene was standing at a window, looking out with some anxiety on a gloomy sky. Rome, another Heliopolis, scarcely looked its true self without its sunshine, which lends it such a glory, and speaks in a poetical language of colors all its own and untranslatable into any other. Irene looked wistfully out; a ray of light would have seemed such a good omen to her. She had in full measure the Italian sensitiveness to outward impressions, the same shrinking from gloom and harshness in any shape which showed itself so strongly in the ancients by their studious avoidance of words that might imply an ill omen, and the constancy with which their poets ignored the stern and rugged aspects of nature.

Irene and Vincenzo were alone together; Leone was with the regiment to which he had joined himself; Cecchi still belonged to the National Guard; both were at their posts, and the whole palace contained scarcely one man.

As Irene gazed idly out, one of those solitary thoughts that

sometimes float into the mind, unconnected with anything that was there before, crossed her almost startlingly, a sudden perception of how different must this Rome seem to the countless strangers who came to visit it from what it did to her. To them — a world-renowned past — to her, a living, struggling, suffering present. She, living there, accustomed all her life to its wonders, had never been able, intensely as she loved her birthplace, sufficiently to abstract herself from it to be able fully to comprehend how it appeared to foreigners, and still less could she of late do so, when even Vinconzo's artist friends had ceased to speak of anything but politics. All the emperors put together were not just then half as important as Mazzini.

She turned from the window to Vincenzo, and was beginning to speak in the words of a game which she had learnt at Florence and had introduced with great success among her acquaintance, 'Mona Luna, Mona Luna, give me counsel ——' when the palace suddenly seemed to shake, the air to reverberate with sound; a startled cry from half the inhabitants of the palace was lost in the roar — the first cannon-shot had been fired! Now the great bells of the Capitol and Monte Citorio added their voices to the thunder of the cannonade and the sharp, constant discharge of musketry. Irene sprang to the window and leant out; Vincenzo hurried to her side; heads were bending from every casement all along the street, and agonized exclamations intermingled and were lost in the shouts below, and the tramp of feet, as from every door patrician, burgher, and artisan rushed out to the walls. It was a scene to be beheld, to be shared in, rather than to be described — the impassioned gestures — the storm of voices — the strange weapons — each man brandishing whatever he had first caught up — the rush and tumult — the women waving scarfs, veils, handkerchiefs from the windows — the roar of cannon — the dread, the hope, the inexpressible agitation — the sudden conviction that that which had seemed but an exciting vision was a most terrible reality — the thrills of terror for those dear ones in peril, and the suffocating indignation against the invaders, perjured and without a shadow of excuse as they were — all this can but be remembered years after with the same thrill that shot through heart and soul on that 30th of April, when the siege of Rome began.

The street was left suddenly empty; the throng had rushed through it, and strange loneliness succeeded the heaving, hurrying scene of a moment before. All was silent in the long street, but shouts were heard in the distance and the boom of cannon continued near St. Peter's. Irene could not leave the window, and like her, matrons and maidens still leant hour after hour from their casements, listening, watching, calling to each passer-by for news of the fight. Now prisoners passed, under a guard; then a wounded man was borne by, a sight which made them shrink and tremble; now a thicker discharge of musketry filled all with alarm and expectation; then a pause would excite the same sensations, which grew more intense as time passed. 'How goes it? what is done?' voices would call to some one hurrying by. 'Well — excellently — the Garibaldi legion have driven back the French,' was the exulting reply, the last words half lost as the speaker's rapid stride bore him speedily out of sight, and hands would be clasped and thanksgivings uttered. Next four men carrying a wounded comrade to the hospital would appear at the end of the street, and all bent from the windows in anxious suspense: 'Who is it? who is it? is he badly wounded? Ah! the poor fellow! I do not know him;' or, 'Oh, Holy Virgin, it is Modena, or Viola, or Galentini,' or some other friend or acquaintance, for whom at this moment all the sympathy of near relations was felt.

While sharing with the rest the watch that fluctuated between hope and terror, Irene received a note from the Committee of Aid for the wounded, summoning her to the military hospital which had been established in the Trinità de' Pellegrini. With a very few exceptions only married women had been appointed to undertake the charge of them; but Irene had earnestly desired to be admitted, and Count Clementi and Padre Rinaldi without any difficulty had obtained permission for her; her knowledge of several languages made her valuable, and she was a person of note; her *salon* had been completely the rallying-point of one party among the liberals, so that it seemed fitting to give her a prominent part. Her duties, it seemed, were to begin at once. She gave the note to Vincenzo, and prepared to go, and a strange expedition it was to undertake when the air was

full of smoke and shot, and the streets brimming over with agitated crowds. She half doubted whether Maddalena would venture to accompany her, but the woman drew her shawl over her head and showed herself ready at once. Irene threw her arms round Vincenzo's neck, and went. He, who could not fight for Rome, still leant at the window, his heart with those at Porta Cavalleggieri, and watching with keen anxiety every sight and sound that came within his ken.

Irene's way to the hospital was lengthened by the barricades, which obliged her to take a devious course, or avoid them by passing through houses and court-yards. She found many wounded men had already been brought in, and there was a considerable number of women there ready to aid as best they could, but greatly in want of a director. Irene saw that she should be obliged to remain all night, for there was much to be done, and her habits of command at her theatre made her able to assume the authority to which the others at once bowed. *Regolatrice* of a hospital! it was a strange new employment for her, inexperienced as she was. Nothing was yet well in train; all were new to their work, unused to each other, highly excited and anxious, uneasily conscious of how weighty was the labor they had undertaken, and horrified by the ghastly sights that were continually brought before them. Irene did her best to make a clear head and ready wit atone for her lack of experience, gave her directions briefly and decidedly, tried to foresee what would be wanted, and availed herself of all the knowledge possessed by one or two of her assistants who had been previously used to helping at a hospital. She had not realized how terrible gunshot wounds were, how much suffering she should have to witness and endure; she tried not to feel, but only to think, till her pulses would throb more calmly and her voice sound more steady; and the incessant call on her attention from her assistants, all requiring precise orders, was no small help, though the dread that among those bleeding, mutilated forms continually brought in, she should see some familiar face, was continually agitating her heart. As she was giving out some stores, a voice spoke her name; turning in terror, she saw a mere child had just come in, and recognised a cousin of Imelda's.

'Filippo, my dear boy, you here!' she exclaimed in astonishment; 'are you much hurt?'

'No; I could not help going to the walls,' replied the boy, as she supported him, while a surgeon examined his bleeding arm; 'they locked me up at home, but I got out on the roofs, and down by the walls of the convent near; there is an acacia — ah!'

'Did I hurt you, my lad?' asked the surgeon, kindly; 'it is almost over.'

'Hurt! I did not complain,' said Filippo, indignantly, pressing his lips hard together, however. 'And I got to Porta Cavalleggieri, and there — oh, such a fine sight! the French driven back pell mell, fighting like demons! a poor fellow of ours dropped just as I got there; he had his leg broken. Doctor, I hope there will be a scar on my arm?' he asked, very anxiously. The surgeon laughed kindly, and did not disappoint him by a cruel negative. Irene was wanted in a hundred other places, but she could not leave the boy till his arm was bound up. He leant his head against her, and with his other hand pressed her fingers on his forehead, where large drops were starting, for the pain was severe, though he would not own it. 'Is that man here or in the other hospital? He was put into an ambulance, and as he could not fight any more, I asked him to give me his gun, and I shot — I did, I assure you — several times, before this rascally bullet hit me. Ah, why would they not let me volunteer into the Garibaldi legion? All the ground was covered with dying men; it was a magnificent sight, only they groaned and looked dreadful, and that made one's heart ache, though I believe most of them were Frenchmen. And just as I was aiming at a great fellow I got shot myself, and, if you will believe me, Signor Nota saw me, and came through a thunderstorm of shot to me; it was sweeping the whole road, and he knelt down by me and lifted me up, and carried me quite gently and coolly across out of fire, and all our men cheered him. Well, it is done, doctor!'

'Yes, my friend; and now I should recommend you to go home; for neither I nor the signorina have any more time to spare for you.'

'Well, I go. What will they say to me? I thought I had better come here and be looked to before returning home. But

I really must find that carabineer and tell him it was not my fault that I lost his gun. It fell as Signor Nota was carrying me, and I could not ask him to stop, for he would have been shot, without doubt. I think I will go back to seek for it.'

'Nonsense, Filippo, you may buy him another; but I am certain that some one else is using it by this time. Your carabineer is not here; he must be at the Bene Fratelli. Promise me you will go home,' said Irene, kissing him with a full heart. 'One moment; what did Signor Nota do when he had got you safe?'

'Rushed into the *mêlée*, I suppose; I do not know. *Addio*, dear signorina. I hope you will see me here again soon.'

Irene could not help smiling, but she had to leave the little hero to his fate and attend to more serious cases. Many beds were already occupied by wounded men; on the pale, contracted faces of some resolute endurance was stamped, but others gave way utterly, and broke into groans and complaints unchecked and heart-rending. As Irene turned from Filippo a man was brought in by four comrades, wounded to death. A faint moan escaped him as they laid him down; she went to his side and saw death already in his face. 'Farewell, comrade,' said one of those who had carried him in, lingering after the other three had hurried back to their posts; 'how goes it now?'

'*Viva Italia!*' muttered the poor fellow, almost inaudibly. His friend looked at Irene, shook his head and went, dashing some tears from his eyes. The surgeons were all employed with other cases; Irene leant over the dying man, seeing his lips attempting to form a word. 'Water!' she divined rather than heard; she held it to his mouth; he swallowed a little with difficulty, opened his dimmed eyes, and feebly moving his right hand to the tricolored ribbon on his breast, murmured, 'For my wife.'

'She shall have it, I promise you. Where shall I take it?' Irene answered.

'To Via——' the voice failed, the eyelids fluttered, the lips ceased to move; he was dead before the priest, who was hastening towards the bed, could reach it. Irene pressed her hands upon her eyes; some of the horrors of war had come very near her, but she must not linger by those who were beyond her help; she turned away, with keen regret that at least she could not

fulfil the poor fellow's last wish. He seemed to be a Trasteverin of the lower class, a fine handsome man, scarcely of middle age; his uniform was smeared with powder and blood, and pierced through and through with balls. As cases more or less serious thickened, Irene and her fellow-workers were more and more occupied. They were all thankful when Padre Rinaldi came in, and at his name some of the wounded, too, half raised themselves, eager to attract his notice. He had been all the morning at the Bene Fratelli, where was a staff of other ladies, full of good will, but most inexperienced. Signora Olivetti was among them, using to the full all the medical knowledge she had gained by attending the sick in more peaceful days. Padre Rinaldi brought calmness, method, and experience with him; Irene felt as if half her responsibility were lightened from the moment he appeared, and as she watched him bending over the sufferers, consoling and cheering them, she could well understand the passionate devotion with which he had inspired the volunteers, whose dangers and hardships he had fully shared.

Late in the evening she hurried back to Vincenzo for a moment, inhaling the air outside the hospital with refreshment, though still the reek of blood and heavy stifling blue smoke seemed to hang in it. The cannon were mute, but their boom still sounded in her wearied ear; still she heard groans and saw faces convulsed with agony rise before her aching eyes. The streets were as full as ever, soldiers were marching through them; friends were meeting again with ecstasy, women imploring the passers-by to give them news of some who came not home; sometimes a mounted officer dashed past; new barricades were rising, those who were building them worked with a desperate energy — how unlike the idle sauntering with which the Italian laborer mostly toils! Just where Irene and her maid wanted to cross, a barricade was being formed; a deep trench had been dug across the pavement, and on the mound of earth formed on one side carriages, chairs, logs, nay, even the splendid coach of a cardinal, were being rapidly piled up into a barricade by a triumphant crowd. Irene had to turn back; another stopped her progress at the next turning, and she was hesitating in perplexity, when with great courtesy two of the men at work threw

a table across the gulf, helped her over and saw her safely on the other side. She felt as if all the impatience to know how matters had really gone, which had been forcibly dammed up all day and only tenfold increased by the flying reports which reached the hospital, now rushed over her like a flood. She flew up the staircases with winged speed, darted past Menica who let her in, and into the sitting-room. Vincenzo met her before she could ask a question, 'All well — all glorious — the French repulsed, Leone safe, 500 prisoners, a triumph; we raw recruits have utterly smashed them, Irene.'

Irene could only reply by a burst of tears, but quickly recovering, she asked for particulars.

'They came up in disorder,' Vincenzo continued, with triumphant exultation, 'shouting hurrah for luncheon in the Piazza of St. Peter's! They thought to walk in at an open gate; Garibaldi and the Carabineers charged them, drove them back, though they resisted furiously; there has been hard fighting, but we won the day gloriously — completely! Garibaldi has pursued them towards Cività Vecchia, and that is all I know, except that Leone, who told me — '

'Leone! Oh, where is he?'

'He could not stay, he only rushed up for a moment. Ah! I knew you would be terribly disappointed, darling.'

'Never mind; and I must go back to the hospital directly. Well?'

'He says new barricades are being created everywhere.'

'I can testify to that.'

'And the city is mad with joy. If the French assault again, they will simply be more thoroughly beaten than before. Pray Heaven they may, the rascally traitors! Is not this fine news for Oudinot to write to Paris? We Caraibes can fight, it seems. I trust Garibaldi will drive them all into the sea at Cività Vecchia.'

'Leone was safe?'

'Yes, quite — quite; rather grimy with smoke and powder, but looking more like our old Leone of three years ago than I have seen him since Rossi's death. Ravelli had several shots through his hat, and Donati was rather badly wounded by a

French sabre; but I know of no other disasters among our own friends. Some of our people have lost relations, I fear, but our loss is nothing compared to the French. You look tired, dearest; this has been a hard day for you!'

'Oh, not as hard as to have stayed here doing nothing but watch! I am very glad of this coffee, though,' said Irene, as Menica opportunely entered with a cup for her, and stood waiting while she drank it, to have the benefit of the conversation.

'Have you heard anything of Clementi and the Bersaglieri?'

'The Signor Conte has been here,' Menica interposed.

'Yes, he came in for an instant, sadly distressed about the contessa; the sound of the cannonade seems nearly to have terrified her to death. Manara and his troop were placed with the reserve and took no part in the fray.'

'What is that?' said Irene, looking across the street into the open windows of the opposite house, which their windows commanded. 'There is grief there!'

They could see that a man in uniform had just entered the room. A woman started up to meet him and gazed into his face with a look of speechless inquiry. He shook his head and covered his eyes with his hand. The windows were wide open; Irene must have heard if a word had been exchanged, but the gesture was enough; and the woman fell insensible at his feet. He hastily raised her, lifted her to a sofa, and seemed to summon attendants, who tried long to restore her to life, while he stood by motionless, his eyes bent on the ground. Animation at length returned, and unrestrained hysterical weeping told that with it had come the knowledge of some irreparable loss.

'Our triumph has cost her very dear!' said Irene, deeply moved; 'do you remember who it is that lives there? I wonder what relation they have lost? Poor, poor people! Oh, in how many, many houses to-night there must be mourning!'

Very strange at this moment did it seem to hear Madama Cecchi laughing in her room on the other side of the wall — her old hearty laugh, which was by no means over when she entered the apartment of the brother and sister.

'Ah, my signorina! You are returned? It is a consolation to see you! *Viva i nostri!* You have heard all the story,

signorina mia? And I have had a visitor, Paoli; you know that poor fellow, Signor Vincenzo? I would not say he had a *baiocca's* worth of courage —— well, he has just been with me, and says he, "Signora, you have heard of the barricades at Porta Cavalleggieri; do you know what I have done?" "No, speak!" "I dare not, indeed I dare not!" "Come, come, speak!" "Did they tell you of the French officer on a grey charger who fell first of all? *Giusto!* I did it, signora. I never had a gun in my hand before, but I bought one, and stood behind the sacks, and when he came on, shouting 'Advance!' and waving his sabre to his men, we all fired, and he went down! I cannot say, you know, for we all fired, but I believe my shot hit him!" The poor man looked so pleased and so frightened, signorina, like an innocent baby. So I put on a face of one who is scandalized and said, "And do you feel no remorse when you think of that poor man, *Raffaele mio?*" "Do not ask me, do not ask me, signora." "Come, tell me; I am a woman of honor." And he, "Well, then, I would do the same again. Hush, signora! for charity's sake! tell no one. I did not know what was in me!" And I, "Ah, *Raffaele mio*, remember the proverb, 'Let him who has a straw tail keep from the fire'!"'

And therewith Madama Cecchi once more burst out laughing, and her audience could not but join her.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

But one sad heart, one tearful eye,
Pierced deeper through the mystery,
And watched with agony and fear
Her wayward bridegroom's varied cheer.

SCOTT.

So complete was the check which the French had received that it did not seem impossible that Vincenzo's wish respecting their fate might have come to pass, had not the Triumvirate recalled Garibaldi, with a hope that this forbearance might propitiate the French Republic, and end the war at once. The Plenipotentiary Lesseps arrived from France, and about a month was spent in diplomatic conferences, during which of course there was an armistice, and the French freely entered Rome and visited the inhabitants in the most brotherly manner. Meanwhile Garibaldi and several companies of volunteers went out to attack the Neapolitans, who, some 20,000 strong, were now at Albano and Frascati, apparently waiting to see the Romans and the French fight. Garibaldi's name alone was nearly enough to put them to flight; the expedition was almost a frolic; and news of such easy victories came to Rome as raised the spirits of all to the highest pitch.

As no new cases were brought to the hospitals, Irene's duties grew light; she was only obliged to spend part of each day at the Pellegrini, to see that her directions were duly carried out. She went thither with daily increasing thankfulness that the siege had ended so speedily, for even this taste of war had made all realize what its horrors might be; and the result of Lesseps' conferences with the Triumvirate was awaited with intense anxiety. Each day before she left Palazzo Clementi, Irene used

to glance at the windows of her opposite neighbor, and many times she saw the black-robed figure sitting alone, picking lint which was wetted by her quietly dropping tears. It was a picture of resigned sorrow which never failed deeply to move Irene, and she knew that that house contributed more lavishly than any other to the wants of the hospitals, when night by night the carts went round soliciting supplies. There was no acquaintance between her and the mourner, but they often exchanged looks, sympathizing on the one side, grateful on the other, which made almost a friendship between them.

Irene went to the Pellegrini one day towards the end of May, bearing a bunch of lilies of the valley in her hand, knowing well how refreshing their purity and fragrance would be to those lying in the hospital atmosphere, which notwithstanding every care was most oppressive in that hot weather when spring was fast passing into summer. She felt it overpoweringly as she entered, and was obliged to pause for a few moments to grow accustomed to it before she advanced. All was now in perfect order, and there was no lack of attendants; the sufferers fared as well as was possible, but fever was greatly increased by the heat, and Irene knew that many there would never rise from those pallets again. Some were sitting up, taking food; others lay looking round with hollow, anxious eyes and wasted features; others lay sunk in stupor like the death into which it would soon pass. The nurses were quietly moving to and fro, and a priest as usual did not fail to be in attendance, with unwearied, unweariable zeal.

Irene presently advanced, and visited one bedside after another, bringing cheerfulness with her, and rewarded, oh, how well! by the looks of love and reverence which followed her. She who had had all the Roman musical world at her feet was now in a very different sphere, and did her work with as brave and gentle a spirit as ever, always true to herself and her womanhood. She did not confine her ministrations to the hospital only; for to one invalid she brought news of a mother, too old and feeble to visit her wounded son, but rendered satisfied and happy by obtaining news of him from the *regolatrice* herself, and who had sent him by Irene's hands a little token of remembrance.

Another she soothed by an assurance that a friend was supporting the family whose means of subsistence ceased with his illness. A third rejoiced in the Gazette which she brought him, wherewith to while away an hour. Where she had nothing else to give, kind words at least were never wanting; words treasured up by those manly hearts which rejoiced in wounds they had received 'for Italy.'

Amongst the Italians some French were scattered, and it was satisfactory to perceive that there was no ill-will between the late enemies, but rather the honest respect which one man feels for another who, he knows, has done his duty.

Irene's handful of lilies had grown smaller and smaller as she advanced from bed to bed, leaving one here and another there, where wistful eyes had lingered beseechingly on the fresh pure blossoms. She had only one left when she came to a pallet where a French soldier was lying. An officer of his own nation, who had obtained permission to visit his sick countryman, was sitting beside him. Irene saw that the invalid had a visitor, and was passing on, when his '*Bon jour, mademoiselle!*' entreated her to pause. She came back and inquired in French after his welfare; heard he was soon to leave the hospital, and smiled in acknowledgment of his warm thanks for the kindness he had received.

'The beautiful flower!' he said, looking at her last lily.

'I must not give it to a French republican,' she answered, gaily; 'it is a royal flower;' but she held it to him as she spoke, and he took it eagerly, inhaling its perfume, and laying the cool broad leaves against his hot cheeks. Irene saw his companion's eyes fixed earnestly upon her, with a kind of recognition; and remembered him as the French officer whom she had seen at Santa Chiara. He saw that she did so, and made a movement as if to claim acquaintance. The wounded man noticed the mutual dumb acknowledgment, and said,

'You are acquainted with Mademoiselle Mori, my colonel?'

'We have met before, my friend, and I have the advantage of knowing her name,' said Colonel de Crillon. 'May I make mine known to mademoiselle? I have heard so much of her from my

comrades here, that I might almost flatter myself that I know her already.'

'I have spoken to her of my dear master, often; is it not so, mademoiselle?' said the invalid, eagerly; 'here he is!'

'Yes; but you have never called him anything but "my colonel," and "my good master,"' said Irene, smiling, but rather unwilling to be forced into an acquaintance with a French officer.

'*Mais, mademoiselle!* It is the Colonel de Crillon!'

'Colonel de Crillon!' exclaimed Irene, coloring vividly, and looking so startled that master and man might well be astonished; and the latter was beginning to weave a magnificent romance out of her evident knowledge of the colonel, when, recovering herself, she continued, 'This is not your first visit to my Rome, monsieur?'

'I was here lately for a few days.'

'And once before!'

'It is true,' he answered, much surprised; 'for a short — too short — a time some years ago, mademoiselle.'

'And once on a Sunday evening you visited the wood on the Pincio — the Bosco.'

'I did — I did,' he answered, suddenly remembering it, 'and doubtless, mademoiselle, you can tell me the fate of two poor children to whom I caused great misfortune. I see by that allusion you know them.'

Irene paused in mischievous enjoyment of his eagerness; she saw that he had not the faintest suspicion who she was.

'Their name?' she asked, demurely.

'I have forgotten it — with shame I acknowledge it. I entreated a physician here to send me information of them, but he never did so; his time no doubt was infinitely occupied, and many events crowded upon me, so that I too ceased to think of the incident, but now the whole scene rises before me. I should like to know whether that poor boy recovered. To this moment, I assure you, I think of that day with pain.'

'No; he is a cripple still, and always will be,' Irene answered sadly.

'Ah, I feared — And the little girl?

'You have quite forgotten what she resembled, monsieur?'

'I recollect that she had magnificent eyes — *veloutés* — eyes like a deer's, or ——' he smiled as he looked for an instant at Irene's, the only equally splendid eyes he thought, that he had ever seen. 'It was her only beauty, at least that night, for fear and tears do not embellish.'

Irene smiled archly and said, 'I think she was called Irene, monsieur; her memory was almost as faithless for faces as yours, it seems, but at least she remembered your name, and even had a fancy that your face was that of a friend when she saw you at Santa Chiara.'

'It is impossible!' exclaimed Colonel de Crillon, examining with amazement and incredulity the features of Irene, still rather more brightly colored than usual, and so much changed and ennobled since her childish days by mind and thought that he might well be excused for his unbelief.

'It is true,' she answered; 'I am Irene Mori, and you asked after my brother Vincenzo.'

'Ah, mademoiselle! what happiness — behold you rewarded for your goodness to me!' exclaimed the invalid, greatly delighted.

Irene and the colonel both laughed a little, and the latter said, 'I only brought you misfortune in our former meeting, and I fear not many agreeable associations with this one. But believe me, had it depended on me, this assault had never taken place. I derived, from my late visit here, the strongest impression of the unadvisability of any armed interference; but as my representations entirely failed, nothing remained for me but a soldier's duty, obedience, reluctant as I was to fight in this cause.'

'Oh, it has seemed so hard to fight against the French, in whom we have always hoped! We have suffered so much — Such glorious dreams! Such a dark awakening! But we are all to be friends for the future — this good Lesseps!' said Irene, recovering her joyous tone — 'all must go well since it is confidently asserted that he has signed a treaty of peace.'

Colonel de Crillon was silent, for he had reason to doubt whether Oudinot would allow any such treaty to be binding, but he had no right to express his private opinion.

'I must not linger; it grows late,' said Irene, perceiving how the daylight was waning.

Colonel de Crillon took advantage of her assurance that she bore the French no ill-will, to say, 'Is it permitted that I visit your brother? Would he allow one of the enemy to claim his acquaintance?'

'Yes,' said Irene, cordially; 'I answer for him. You will find his apartment on the third floor of Palazzo Clementi, if you will give him the pleasure of a visit. Signor Mori — all know where he lives.'

'When am I most likely to find him at home?'

'Always,' answered Irene, her bright eyes growing sad; 'he is not able to climb those stairs without too great an effort. Adieu! Adieu, M. Marot!' and she glided away, leaving master and servant equally full of pleasure and interest, though not quite of the same kind, since Colonel de Crillon's feelings were only admiration and agreeable excitement at this unexpected rencontre, while Marot had already planned a marriage between his master and his kind nurse, forgetting, in his enthusiasm, the fact that the lamps which shine in the opera-house at the feet of a cantatrice, form a line of demarcation between her and the rest of the world which Colonel de Crillon was not a man likely to overlook. Irene had been singularly fortunate in having many valuable friends who cared nothing for that bar. To them she was Irene only, the dearest and best; and even in general society her name stood so high and her tact and good sense were such that she had made her own position; so that even in the houses of the exclusive nobles she was looked on as friend and guest, not merely as one from a different sphere, tolerated that she might amuse the visitors. But Colonel de Crillon knew too little of Roman society to be aware of the estimation in which she was held, and in the eyes of a Frenchman an *artiste* seldom indeed holds an exalted place. He could not but respect Irene from all that he had heard of her, and from her own air and tone; but very far indeed would he have been from contemplating the bare possibility of such a *mésalliance* as that which had occurred to the active imagination of worthy M. Marot.

Irene went from the hospital to Casa Olivetti, where she knew

that she should find friends assembled, as it was the evening on which its mistress received her weekly *società*. She had not much time to spare, since she hoped to find Leone at Palazzo Clementi, spending at least one hour in rest. At Casa Olivetti she found some dozen friends; among them, Ravelli, Gemma, and Signora Clementi, but Clementi himself was absent, no unusual thing in these busy times. Irene asked Gemma where he was, and heard that Mazzini had summoned him to a private interview. Gemma added, that he had bidden her to tell Irene that a courier was about to start with despatches from Mazzini to Siena; and that if she had any letters to send, they might go quickly and safely by this opportunity.

'Oh, thanks!' said Irene; 'I wish very much that a letter should reach England soon and safely; I find from one that came to me to-day from Mrs. Dalzell, that she has not received any from me for several weeks. I will go home at once and write, if you will excuse me, dear signora.'

'Assuredly; lose no time, *carina*,' said Signora Olivetti; and Irene, as she kissed her, was so struck by the careworn look on her face, and the convulsive pressure of the hand which she held, that notwithstanding her haste, she paused to discover the reason. It was easily perceived. She read it the moment she noticed Luigi's flushed brow and compressed lips and the defiant manner in which he was devoting himself to Gemma, openly, as he had never done before, to the visible astonishment of Signora Clementi and the other guests. And Gemma, perplexed, confused, yet triumphant, seemed to dare and set at nought all remarks; while in Imelda's wondering, startled eyes, Irene saw that even she began at last to comprehend and suffer. Irene's look towards Luigi was so earnest an inquiry, that he, longing to vent his excitement, started up and accompanied her down-stairs, where Maddalena as usual was waiting, but discreetly kept at a distance, when she saw that something serious was passing.

''Tis done, Irene! You know that I would not have thought of myself as such a time — of even her — you know it! but the Fates would have it; my father gave me the opportunity to-day, and I told him the whole story then and there!'

'And he was very angry.'

'Angry! beside himself rather! But as I live, he shall learn that I am no child; if I cannot obtain his consent, I will do without it — of Clementi I am secure. He cannot give me his sister under these circumstances, but he will let me take her. I asked him the question, and though he scarcely spoke, I feel, I know — yes, all may and shall see that I love her!'

'But not now, Luigi, not here!'

'Now and here — would to Heaven it had been all said and done years ago!' exclaimed Ravelli, in no mood to be reasoned with. 'Long ago you counselled frank dealing; here you have it, and now blame me!'

'Poor Imelda!' said Irene to herself, with a suppressed sob. 'Poor little one! as innocent and as easily broken as my lilies!'

Ravelli heard the sob, though not the words. 'Irene! you are talking to a man who has been driven half mad — I do not know what I say or do. Waste no words on me; it must all come to daylight now. What! would you have me marry Imelda while I love Gemma? There! good night.' He ran up the stairs again, and Irene, with irrepressible tears falling unseen under the shadow of her hood, went home.

Ravelli was already beside Gemma; and her aunt, doubtless thinking he had gone at least far enough, was about to summon her to her side; when a new guest came in with authentic tidings that a treaty of peace had been definitively signed by Lesseps, subject to the revision of the French Government, but securing in all cases a further armistice for fifteen days.

In the exceeding joy and commotion caused by this news, Gemma was unnoticed for a few moments, during which Luigi bent down to her, and said in a whisper, 'I must see you this evening in the garden — at midnight.' She replied only by a look; her heart beat high with mingled expectation and alarm; she cast a triumphant, malignant glance on her shrinking rival, whose downcast eyes were now full of tears. The next instant Imelda looked up into Luigi's face, and in the reproach of that gaze was an expression that told that the child had become a woman. Luigi winced, but stubbornly put down the pang that went through his heart, and threw himself into vehement discussion of the news that was engrossing the company. Signora

Clementi called Gemma, who obediently sat down close to her, and did not attempt to exchange another word with Ravelli all the rest of the evening.

When the guests were gone, Imelda bade her mother as usual good night. Signora Olivetti held her child's hands and looked in her face in silence. Never before had Imelda felt a sorrow without throwing herself on her mother's breast and finding comfort. She would fain have done so now, but something withheld her, and though her lips trembled, and she turned pale, and shrank from the earnest tenderness of that gaze, she only repeated 'Good night, dearest mother!' and Signora Olivetti let her go with a half belief that she did not even yet quite realize the pain in store for her. The mother said to herself, 'To-morrow! Not to-night. Let her sleep one more night in peace!' But when later she went, as she never failed to do, to look at her sleeping child in the little bedroom opening out of her own, she found Imelda asleep indeed, but a tear slowly stealing over her cheek, and her long eyelashes very dewy. Her mother stood and looked at her with unspoken anguish written in every feature. One or two scalding tears dropped upon the hands which she had pressed together — tears, compared to which Imelda's, though they seemed to the poor child as bitter as tears could be, were but the drops of an April shower which the sun and the breeze would soon disperse.

CHAPTER XL.

When trembling stars look'd silvery in their wane,
And heavy flowers yet slumbered, once again
There stole a footstep, fleet, and light, and lone,
Thro' the dim cedar shade; the step of one
That started at a leaf, of one that fled,
Of one that panted with some secret dread.

MRS. HEMANS.

BEHIND Palazzo Clementi was a garden, accessible only through the inner quadrangle, and appropriated solely to the owners of the palace. It was surrounded by high walls, shutting it off from the streets, and was divided by an iron screen from the quadrangle. A passer-by in the streets would only have seen the lofty walls, over which orange-trees raised their glossy leaves and golden fruit; and the dilapidated old vases containing aloes and standing at intervals along them. No one could have suspected what a charming garden was contained within. The ground was so high inside, probably raised artificially, that had any agile climber once reached the top of the wall, he would not have had to spring down more than a few feet. From the quadrangle, the garden was reached by two semicircular flights of steps, leading to a long rather than broad parterre, laid out in formal flower-beds with a fountain rising out of a miniature lake in the centre, and a *casino* or summer-house at the further end, consisting of several rooms adorned with frescoes — a delightful summer retreat. But the charm of the garden was the *pergola*, a covered walk with roses clustering thickly over it, and within, a double row of orange and lemon trees, forming an avenue, through whose screen no eye from without could penetrate.

Once or twice before, Gemma had ventured to meet Luigi here, when Count Clementi was absent from Rome; but such trysts were doubly dangerous, since she was too far from her apartment to be able to return at a moment's warning. On this evening she would have risked anything, for Luigi's conduct told her that a crisis in their fate had come. When he whispered 'The garden!' she recollected with dismay that almost from the day of Pio Nono's flight, Clementi had kept the iron gate locked; and that no one but himself had ever entered the *casino* for months — why she knew not, though she had a shrewd guess. She had watched him enter the garden stealthily at night more than once; and curiosity had kept her on the alert till he returned, which was not till a very late hour. She did not in the least think that he had been looking at the moonlight glittering in the fountain, nor enjoying the fragrance of the orange blossoms, nor even that he went to meet any one either young or fair. She had a strong conviction that Clementi was resolved, with all that intensity and fixedness of purpose which she knew full well, not only that the Revolution would not succeed, but that it *should* not. She believed that he had kept up a constant correspondence with Gaeta, and that in the *casino* plans were concerted which steadily thwarted every movement of the republicans. Gemma was perfectly certain that Clementi could have told the very hour on which the French attack was to be made, and that copies of every one of Mazzini's despatches were forwarded to the Court of Pio Nono.

While Rome believed that Monsignore Clementi had fled months before, his niece was as certain that he was concealed in the *casino* as if she had had a glimpse of those violet stockings which he fondly hoped his present exertions in the Pope's behalf would soon give him the right to dye scarlet, or as if she had beheld his liveried attendant waiting openly for him at the garden gate. Long ago she would have betrayed both him and the Count had she dared, and sometimes a vision crossed her fertile and perverted mind of fabricating some tale which should lead Ravelli to believe that she had but just discovered her brother's treachery; but she had not of late had one opportunity of speaking apart to her lover, and the horrible death of the two

wretched spies made her tremble and hesitate lest such should be the fate of Pietrucchio. She now hoped to avoid the temptation to betray, by hearing — of what she knew not — but of some happy turn of fate. The garden! It was a perilous rendezvous; but the *pergola* was thick, Clementi was engaged elsewhere; there never were lights visible at night in the *casino*. The locked gate? But Gemma said to herself that she *would* conquer that obstacle; at the worst, she could speak to Luigi through the grating, and her spirit only mounted exultantly as the peril came more clearly before her. That night she defied fate and fortune. Luigi was remarkably light and active; he had never found any difficulty in scaling the wall by means of the trees which grew in a tall group outside. He would not fail her, and certainly she would not fail him. She listened with edifying contrition to Signora Clementi's lectures as they went homewards, and assured her that it was only to torment that silly child Imelda that she coquetted with Ravelli. Her aunt was conscious that her surveillance was apt to be lax, and spoke with proportionate anger; and Gemma found a good excuse for immediately retiring to her room in the pretended tears which this severity called forth. She ascertained that Count Clementi had not returned; doubtless he was still with the Triumvirate.

Midnight was announced by a great clock somewhere not far distant, each stroke resounding heavily in the silent air. She stole from her room, glided into the corridor like a guilty ghost, down into the quadrangle; she had reached the iron gate. Her white dress, and the white opera cloak which she had not thrown off, added to her ghostly appearance; her face was colorless, making a startling contrast with her raven hair and burning dark eyes. She leant her face against the iron gate and listened. It moved and creaked; she shrank back in terror, but all was still again; overhead the clear stars shone; the fountain plashed, the white orange blossoms exhaled their exquisite perfume; a nightingale sang among them. Behind her the palace rose dark and huge and massive. She listened as if she had been all ear; the gate clinked again, and looking closely, she saw that the lock had shot but not caught; too hasty a hand had turned the key; the iron tongue was outside its case; the gate was unfastened. In a

moment she was in the garden; she glanced towards the casino. All was dark, without a sign that it was inhabited; nor the faintest token that might wake Luigi's suspicions. With relief she entered the *pergola*, where the starlight only penetrated sufficiently to make all shadowy, but not dark, or here and there glided in where the rose trellis was less thick, and made a mirror of a glossy leaf, or kissed a cluster of fragrant snowy blossoms. There Gemma waited breathlessly. She heard in a little while the rustling of swaying boughs — a leap, a quick step — Luigi's arm was round her; his voice was uttering protestations of love so vehement and impassioned, that it was easy to see that he was excited beyond all self-control. She heard them unchecked till a thought crossed her mind, and striving to release herself, she exclaimed, with instinctive caution, in a low voice, 'Why have you neglected me then these many weeks? Are you daring to play with me?'

'Play! This is earnest, compared to which life and death are play, Gemma! Listen — I have heard, one hour ago, from certain authority, that that dog Oudinot will refuse to ratify Lesseps' convention. May he die by a cord! He is not worthy of a soldier's death. Then, then Gemma, if we are defeated — if — all things are possible! Garibaldi will never submit; he will cut his way through the enemy, he and his men and Annuccia his wife!'

'Luigi, you frighten me!' she murmured, really terrified by his violence.

'Then I had best not say what I came for — I had other things to say when I bade you meet me here, but they are gone! I can't recollect them, I only know what I have heard since. Well, I will be as composed as yonder urn if you like, but listen; I am one of Garibaldi's men; I too will sooner be torn to pieces than live here to see the monkish robes in our streets again, trampling our freedom under their sanctified feet; forging heavier chains for us with every word that those meek lips of theirs utter. Never, no never will I see that — as I am an Italian. I swear it as I believe in our cause. But you, but you, Gemma! my Gemma! my own! best loved of all I have on earth, what is to become of you? Annuccia goes with her husband; will

you follow yours? Am I dreaming, or is it true that a woman laughs at danger and poverty beside him whom she loves? Is it all utter selfishness, or am I right in deeming him a fool who leaves the girl he loves because he fears want and hardships for her? As for me, to leave you would be to pluck up my life by the roots — why should I think it easier for you?'

'No, no, no; anything but leave me; you shall not, you shall not, Luigi;' and she clung to him convulsively.

'Then be my wife, and my fate will be your fate, and if I go alone — No, I could not expose you to such a flight as that would be, my darling — at least I will find some sort of a home for us both, and I will send for you, love, never fear. I am talking like a lunatic! Ah, never shrink from me, I know my own plans. All may be well, we may hold out, but for every reason I must be able to claim you as my wife.'

'But how — who?'

'Meet me to-morrow at San Nicolo, and I will find a priest who will marry us. You need not fear Clementi; I have spoken to him; he knows it all; I cannot tell you the story now — another time, when I am myself. That perjured villain Oudinot!'

'Knows! Clementi knows!' repeated Gemma, ready to sink into the ground.

'Yes, knows; do you think I would steal you, silly girl? He knew long ago that I loved you.'

In one instant Gemma reviewed her position, took her resolve, and answered, 'I will be there, Luigi.'

'That is right! that is my own dearest, best,' he exclaimed, catching her hands and covering them with kisses.

The two stood near an opening in the *pergola.* A sound as of a softly-opening door startled them; footfalls were distinctly heard; they shrank further back, Gemma striving with frantic but dumb terror to drag Luigi where he could not see who was passing; but he resisted, confident in the deep shadow in which he stood, and eager to see who could be in the garden at this time of night. The steps came from the *casino;* two figures slowly passed, speaking in tones so low that they were inaudible in the *pergola.* The two were vaguely seen in the starlight; one seemed young, the other taller, more ample in form, but both

were shrouded by long cloaks. As they neared the gate, Luigi advanced more and more, full of confused marvel and suspicion. They halted at the gate and turned the key; a rustle in the *pergola* startled them; both suddenly looked back and Ravelli saw distinctly, unmistakably, the faces of the Count and Monsignore Clementi. He stood petrified — then bounded out like a wild beast, but the lock was turned, they had disappeared into the palace. With a cry, hoarse, inarticulate, scarcely human, he was by Gemma's side again; she had dropped on her knees half dead with terror. Clenching his fingers on her wrist, he forced her to rise and asked in a voice which no one could have recognised, 'What is this?'

She could not utter a syllable.

'Answer me!' he thundered; 'are you a traitor too?'

'Kill me at once,' she stammered out.

'Speak! Do you hear me? Yes, speak, speak, say what you will, love, I shall believe you! Forgive me, I know you are innocent!' he exclaimed with a sudden imploring change of tone; 'I do not suspect you — I am mad, quite mad — I must be — is it not so? That was not your brother, nor Monsignore Clementi, but two demons trying to cheat me. Dearest, speak to me!'

But she could not. All her powers of dissimulation had entirely failed; she could make no attempt to work on his present mood.

'Come into the light!' he cried, after a moment's mute waiting for an answer. 'Let me see your face;' and he compelled her to come forth where he could study her colorless, convulsed features, her trembling lips vainly seeking to form some answer. Guilt was in every lineament.

'Ah, ha!' he said, with an indescribably taunting, wild laugh, after examining her countenance for an instant; 'this comes of trusting a woman! You have deceived so many — why not me? Why not the one who loved you, trusted you entirely, as, please Heaven, he will never trust man or woman again! Once will suffice for a lifetime! The play has been well acted, upon my honor! And now kindly tell me how long your brother has been on such excellent terms with monsignore?'

'Always!' she gasped out, entirely powerless under his indignation, more terrible now that it took the shape of irony than even before.

'And you have known it — always!'

'Yes; I dared not — dared not —'

'Dared not!' he repeated. 'Gemma, I loved you! Fool that I was! Oh, double, treble fool! Brother and sister alike!'

'Poniard me, Luigi; only do not look, do not speak so,' exclaimed the unhappy girl, trying to throw herself on his breast, but he held her off with a hand inflexible as iron. No, never! never more! traitress that you are — false to me, false to your country. But because I did love you, I do not curse you now; I did! I do so no more. I esteem you as I would a snake that had nestled to my heart and stung me. An honorable man can feel in one way only for traitors.' He looked again in her face, as if wondering whether this could be indeed his own Gemma. She clasped her hands in voiceless supplication.

'Farewell, farewell love, and trust, and faith,' he said; pressing a sudden kiss on her lips, 'that is for the one whom I used to love and believe in. When? A long while ago, I think! She is dead, and now I have another love to win, whose name is Vengeance. Farewell all that is past and gone!' and with one spring he had freed himself from her hands, reached the wall; and the sudden movement of branches, ceasing instantly, told that he had accomplished his headlong descent. Gemma did not know it; she had sunk down in a deadly swoon the instant he had released himself from her clasp. He rushed on, he knew not whither; purposeless, beside himself, actually insane for the moment. He did not know how long it was before he found himself in the midst of a patrol, answering their demand for the password of the night by some incoherent speech and a furious struggle, which, of course, excited their suspicions and caused him to be surrounded and detained. He grew more collected, but the word, which he had known well enough some hours earlier, was entirely gone from his recollection; he could only give his name, and ask where several officers were who could answer for him. The patrol obliged him to go with them; he knew he must submit, and did

so, for his self-command began to return; but only one thought was clear, to denounce Clementi — denounce him publicly — and when a friend chanced to meet him in his forced round, he burst out at once with his tale so furiously and incoherently that friend and soldiers alike thought him mad. He repeated it, however, with so much persistence that a murmur among the patrol told that he was beginning to gain credence. All recollected the indubitable knowledge that was shown at Gaeta of each minute circumstance which had occurred at Rome — the suspicion which had long existed that there were traitors within the city. It seemed a revelation, a certainty, almost as soon as the mind could take in what he meant.

'This is news of life and death; report it instantly to the Triumvirate!' exclaimed his friend; and the patrol made no opposition whatever to his going. He had at all events convinced them. The hour of five sounded; he knew not how much time he had spent in the garden, nor in that wild course through the streets, nor with the guard; all was still reeling in his brain.

It was a hard matter to awaken the suspicions of the Triumvirate, when after some delay he obtained an audience. They trusted Clementi like themselves, and would consent to no more active measures against him than to summon him before them, rebuking Ravelli sharply for having spread a suspicion against him so incautiously. Unless Gemma's absence had been perceived, he could have had no warning, and doubtless would come, believing himself to be summoned on political business. Ravelli, enraged at this tardy dealing, rushed out of their presence, and long before their messenger was despatched, had reached the apartment of the Mori, where he found Leone, Vincenzo, and Irene, just assembled, for it was still early morning. His entrance, his first words, prepared them for some astounding intelligence; his passionate story was half told, half guessed, and struck them dumb, but he seemed possessed by a spirit that would not let him rest for an instant, and was gone almost before they could ask one question. He was already at Clementi's door. Well was it for the Count that he had left his room early on private affairs. His uncle had quitted Rome that night in profound secrecy for Gaeta. Ten minutes afterwards, he re-

turned, just escaping an encounter with Ravelli, and, knocking at Vincenzo's apartment, walked into the room, where, mute, incredulous, horror-stricken, sat the friends who had just heard of his treachery. He entered with his unvarying calm demeanor, softening into a smile of greeting, which died away at once as their eyes turned upon him. No one spoke or stirred. He stood still by the door, surveying them. He knew as well as if they had told him that, in some incomprehensible way, he was detected. A hot flush mounted to Leone's brow; he rose hastily, and began words which the cool, musical voice of Clementi cut short. 'What! tried, condemned, executed already, without appeal! Is that your meaning, friends?'

'Traitor that you are!' exclaimed Leone, precipitating himself towards him; but Clementi moved slightly aside, saying, 'Would you strike a guest, signor?'

'Before we call you our guest, hear me,' said Vincenzo, rising; 'Count Clementi, you are accused of treason. Leone! stand back; I am in my own house.'

'Accused of treason?' repeated Clementi, calmly and inquiringly.

'Such a tone is answer enough! What honorable man would stop to dally with such a charge!' cried Leone.

The Count maintained unchanged composure, while he weighed in the lightning-swift balance of thought whether it availed to deny. In that instant the horror and aversion in Irene's face overturned his self-control.

'Turn from me if you will, Irene! none have ever loved you as I have. For you I have toiled and planned; all else has been as dust in the scale. I have loved you — loved you, as those who put first what they call their country, — dumb idol that they rear and break! — as such as they never dreamed of! What is your love, Leone Nota, compared with mine? I knew her before you did, staked all I had for her, spent life and honor for her. Irene, you know it!'

Leone's face flushed, he trembled with suppressed passion, blighting words sprang to his lips; Irene turned full on Clementi, with noble anger on her brow —

'I know only that you are a traitor!' she exclaimed.

'This quarrel at least is mine,' cried Leone, losing self-command, as Clementi gazed on Irene as if she alone existed for him, and he had forgotten the charge brought against him. 'Do me the honor to follow me, Count.'

But at that instant, a sound which had been gathering without, unheeded by those within, suddenly forced itself upon their ears; a bellow more like that of a furious ocean than a human cry; a wave of sound which, commencing afar, was taken up by hundreds of voices all blended into one; a hoarse roar, through which the words seemed to rise to Heaven — 'The traitor! the traitor! give us the traitor!'

All the street was surging with a furious throng, heaving, rolling through it, struggling to reach the palace, yelling out execrations — 'Death to the traitor! — death to the traitor!'

Clementi was no coward, but as that shriek came to his ear, his whole frame seemed to shrink and cower; his olive cheek took a ghastly tint; he stood immovable; his ashy lips muttered, 'My turn!'

'Oh, no more blood; no more!' cried Irene, all her feelings suddenly changing. 'Leone! Vincenzo!'

The tramp of feet on the stairs was heard; the mob were rushing towards the Clementi apartments.

'Speak to them, Leone!' she implored.

Clementi held out his hand to her; 'All is welcome, since you will regret me, Irene.'

'No! Not the hand of a traitor,' she answered, in extreme agitation; 'but to see a human being — another —!'

'Escape by the roofs,' exclaimed Vincenzo, hastily opening his door, which communicated with a small outer staircase leading to the highest story. 'Go!'

Clementi gave one look on Irene, turned, was gone. She stood upright, with panting breath and fixed eye; Vincenzo put his hand over his face as though to shut out the very spot where Clementi had stood. Leone abruptly rose: 'This people must have no more blood on their heads,' he muttered, and the next instant was heard darting through the outer door.

There had been an ominous sullen pause without, as if the crowd were awaiting the return of those who had forced their

way into the Clementi apartments. A yell of disappointment followed their return, and a search ensued in the garden, where only Gemma was found, crouching on the ground.

Another short pause, and then a wild scream of exultation from a thousand voices told they had caught sight of their victim. Count Clementi knew it, as he fled across the palace roof and sprang on the next, every sense concentrated in the effort to escape. He was paralysed for an instant, paused, saw the Tiber gleaming not very far off, thought of the fate of those other spies, and fled again, madly, headlong, from roof to roof, now seen, now lost, now seen again by the crowd below, and urged to more frantic flight by perceiving that some of his pursuers had scaled the roofs and were following fast. Now he reached the last house in the street — a convent — a roar of triumph from below showed that the crowd were ready; he could see the faces glaring up at him like those of demons, the hands outstretched to clutch him, though as yet far above them. Behind came on fast, fast, pursuers over the roofs — below heaved the throng. Some feet lower than the roof, the street was spanned by a covered passage leading from the convent to the church. Without an instant's hesitation he dropped upon it, lay stunned for a moment, but gathered his senses with a desperate effort. A scaffolding projected from the half-repaired building; he scrambled on it, how he knew not, saw a wall near, sprang on that, almost within reach of the crowd, thence climbed to another roof, and paused a moment. His purpose had been foreseen; his enemies had ascended the roofs ahead of him and rushed back upon him. He dashed off the foremost, who tottered with a curse against those hurrying after; a balcony was just below, Clementi sprang down into it, knocking down, he knew not whether man or woman, who had hurried to it to learn the cause of the uproar. A shriek followed him as he darted through the open window, dashing over chairs and tables as he fled — into a corridor, down a staircase, across a street. A church stood open; he precipitated himself into it, and fell, breathless, bruised, nearly senseless, on the steps of the high altar. The sacristan, seeing a man rush in for refuge, closed and barred the doors, not a moment too soon, for before the last bolt was drawn, the mob were thundering at them, and

those were days when even a church would not always protect a criminal. Not a soul replied to their summons; only the hard breathings of the hunted man were heard through the building; the sacristan was on his knees shaking as if in an ague; crash after crash resounded on the doors; the crowd were beating them in with heavy weapons. Sobs like a hunted stag's burst from Clementi's breast; he lay prostrate, helpless, death in its most ghastly shape waiting for him. A fresh yell and a creak of yielding barriers told that the last defence was giving way; a wilder shriek of joy proclaimed it doubly.

But out over the tumult rang a trumpet voice, a voice that might have reached the ear of death itself, and well-nigh have called back the soul. Every word was audible, every one of those eloquent tones — the uproar lessened, lessened, sank, was hushed, till only that voice was heard, speaking of love and mercy, both human and divine. It ceased and a perfect silence ensued; then those same tones, which gradually had changed from persuasion to command, bade the church doors be opened. The trembling sacristan rose from his knees and obeyed. Not so much as a silken thread divided the traitor from those lately thirsting for his blood.

Padre Rinaldi entered the church with a crucifix in his hand; he bade Clementi rise, took him by the hand, and led him straight through the crowd, to the carriage in which, at Leone's summons, he had himself hurried to the spot. Not a voice was raised, not a murmur heard in all the crowd, who stood around, with contrite, downcast looks; but Clementi could not lift his eyes, only moved unconsciously along, and sank back in the carriage incapable of even comprehending that he was saved. The crowd watched it disappear, ere they moved; then slowly, mutely dispersed.

CHAPTER XLI.

Borne down in conflict! But immortal seed
Deep, by heroic suffering, hath been sown
On all her ancient hills: and generous hope
Knows that the soil, in its good time, shall yet
Bring forth a glorious harvest! Earth receives
Not one red drop from faithful hearts in vain.

MRS. HEMANS.

ERE the next morning, Clementi was far from Rome. Proofs of his guilt were found in papers and letters, but the Triumvirate were unwilling to award to one still so powerful the death which he had deserved. The contempt and hatred of all his fellow-citizens seemed punishment enough for the detected spy, who could injure them no longer. Perhaps if they had known the full extent of his treachery, his fate might have been different. As it was, he was conveyed in profound secrecy out of the city, free to go whither he would. He had yet to learn that Heaven smote him, though man did not. He might hasten to Gaeta, full of revenge, revolving new schemes, resolute as ever to win Irene, but one blow had fallen which no subtilty, no wisdom could avert. His mother, whom he loved deeply, could not recover from the shock which his awful peril had given her. Even before he left Rome, the frail invalid was dead.

But Clementi's treason itself was driven out of the Roman mind almost immediately by the news that Oudinot actually refused to ratify the convention of Lesseps. In a letter sent by him to the Triumvirate on the 2d of June, he announced that Lesseps had overstepped his powers; that his own private instructions forbade the armistice to be extended; that hostilities were about to recommence, but that in order to give the French residents time to quit the city, he should defer the attack — one day.

Who shall tell the fury, the consternation throughout Rome when this letter was published? Who shall tell how it increased tenfold when on the next morning it was found that the French had surrounded and seized the advanced posts around the gate of San Pancrazio? Oudinot had promised to defer the assault on the city, but had made no agreement concerning the advanced posts. Such was his explanation.

From that moment, the Romans fought at a fearful disadvantage. The battle had shifted from Porta Cavalleggieri to Porta San Pancrazio, and raged there fiercely, ceaselessly. The cannon, silent for a month, began to thunder again; the French batteries replied; and ruined houses, tottering walls, wounds and death, told day after day how desperate was the defence. Lesseps had returned to Paris in towering indignation, vowing to appeal to his Government. In this appeal lay the last hope of the Romans.

Day after day the citizens flocked to the walls, defying death, wrestling hand to hand with despair, seeming only to multiply as man after man fell. So it lasted for three weeks; all felt that the strife was hopeless, but all chose rather to die than yield. Alas! so many did indeed fall, that it was wonderful that Pio Nono found a liberal left to dread when he returned. They threw up new fortifications, and strengthened their batteries; day and night were spent on the walls; Rome was resolved at least to utter one loud, unanimous protest against her tyrants, if she could do no more.

By the 27th of June there was a breach in the walls. Here the last struggle must be made. Villa Savorella, the head-quarters of Garibaldi, lay in ruins. San Pietro in Montorio, the palaces below, the *casini*, the houses all around, were well-nigh battered to pieces. The Trasteverini had suffered fearfully; many of their homes were utterly destroyed, and the Government offered them a refuge in the deserted palaces of the cardinals; but without complaint or murmur with one accord they remained in the front of danger, worthy citizens of Rome. Not a house in the whole city was safe from shot and shell; not a roof so sheltered that a bomb might not bring destruction on the heads of all beneath.

The 29th of June ended amid heavy rain. Around the breach were gathered those who remained to defend it, standing blinded by the storm, knee deep in mud, and diminished momentarily by the fatal, frequent shot and projectiles. The night was wild and gloomy, lighted but by the fiery course of the bombs through the air. The Romans were there to resist, not to conquer — there in vain! In vain, for towards morning the French assault was made, in thick darkness, amid tempest above, tempest below, shouts, incessant discharge of musketry; a hand-to-hand *mêlée*, confused and fatal beyond description. In that assault, among heaps of slain, fell young Emilio Morosini. His companions scarcely knew it as they struggled at the various breaches now made practicable.

In Villa Spada were gathered Manara and a few more of his comrades; here they had barricaded themselves and fought like wolves, amid the smoke, the shot, the glancing balls that rebounded amongst them from ceiling and wall. Manara looked round and saw a young Lombard beside him, whom he had supposed to be on a sick-bed. 'Hallo! what brings you here with a broken arm?' he exclaimed.

'I shall make one more!' replied the brave fellow, who was there to die, if not to fight.

There too was Leone, and as Manara spoke, he staggered and put his hand to his breast. 'Touched?' cried Manara.

''Tis a trifle,' Leone replied. 'Beware of that chasseur, friend!'

'You have all the luck! I am not to have a scar in memory of Rome, it seems,' cried the young leader with bitter gaiety, as he took aim from the window at the enemy pointed out to him. One instant too late! the chasseur had fired; Manara made a sudden step forward and fell on his face. A momentary slackening of the French fire allowed his friends to lift him through a window and bear him to an ambulance, where many others lay dying. Leone and Dandolo bore him thither, and a surgeon, his friend and fellow-citizen, hastened to him, but only to find that death was at hand. Bending over him, Dandolo whispered, 'Think of God!'

'Oh, I do much!' he answered, earnestly but very feebly.

The *viaticum* was brought. Then after giving to Dandolo messages for his family, he looked up and saw the tears which blinded his friends. With his old playful smile he murmured, 'So you are grieved that I die!' But none could command voice to answer, and low but calmly Manara added, 'I too would have had it otherwise.' Morosini was dead, but this he did not know; Enrico Dandolo had fallen long before. Leone was leaning against the ambulance; Manara turned his eyes to him and uttered his name; but no answer came, and with a deep sigh Leone sank down on the ground. His wound was not the slight matter he had supposed in the excitement of the fight; and at least he was spared seeing his friend die.

At this same moment there was a group on the roof of Palazzo Clementi. Irene, the padrona, and even Vincenzo had contrived to ascend thither at daybreak, and with telescopes were gazing towards the walls, where only a confused struggling mass was visible. To venture on the roofs was so full of peril, that the Triumvirate strictly forbade it, but orders were set at nought in the suspense and agony of those last days. They looked with eyes strained and misty; they saw nothing clearly — could not even distinguish the French from the Italians. 'Those are our men at the bastion!' 'No, French!' 'No, no, look again — the French there! it would be ruin!' 'That is a fresh breach since yesterday!' 'Heaven help us!' 'Listen to the uproar! My husband is sure to be in the heart of it.' Such were the confused exclamations interchanged between the watchers.

'The spy-glass is the first sign of the cross with me of a morning now — the first thing I think of,' said Madama Cecchi, 'Ah! all saints help us!'

Her loud scream was answered by a hundred voices; a shell came curving through the air full on the opposite house; a huge cloud of smoke and dust rose up, flames burst through it; from the neighboring houses the inhabitants rushed out; all was helpless terror and destruction. In the quadrangle below was wild hurry and dismay; all were flying from the upper rooms to the ground-floor, seeking imaginary safety in the storehouses. At the same instant rang out a tocsin. Irene clasped her hands above her head in sudden, utter despair. 'Oh, then Heaven has

quite deserted us — that is St. Agostino, and the French must be entering Rome!'

Three days however passed in sullen inaction on both sides. The French could now at any moment have taken the city, but they remained without, while complete uncertainty and confusion prevailed within. Not a barricade was as yet thrown down, the regiments remained at their posts, and crowds filled the streets shouting for war, which all the experienced knew was in fact over.

On the 3d of July the Government announced further resistance to be impossible, and formally opened the gates. That same morning, Garibaldi, aware of what was at hand, gathered his men in the Piazza of St. Peter's and told them that he at least would not live to lay down his arms; he was about, he said, to throw himself into the mountains; he had nothing to offer them but hunger, peril, and war. 'Let him who loves Italy follow me!' he shouted, and accompanied by 4000 brave hearts, he passed through the city, and dashed out at the gate of St. John Lateran.

Slowly the tidings of the surrender spread abroad, so slowly that half the city still expected another assault. In the afternoon the French entered what seemed a region of the dead. Through deserted streets the 12,000 invaders marched with fixed bayonets. The siege of Rome was over.

The first certainty that they had entered was conveyed to Palazzo Clementi by about a hundred men entering the quadrangle, where they were to be quartered. A bomb would have been welcome compared to such a sight. In the utmost alarm all who had taken refuge in the storehouses of the ground-floor rushed back to their apartments, and awaited in unspeakable suspense what was to ensue; but even in that moment it was noted, and never pardoned, that the Clementi apartments were instantly placed at the disposal of the French.

Neither Leone nor Cecchi had been heard of for three days. Irene and Vincenzo had remained in their rooms, and so had Madama Cecchi, careless now of their fate, since Rome had fallen and those they loved with her. They did not even hear the fresh confusion; Madama Cecchi was first warned of what

had occurred by a French officer knocking at her door to inform her that every one who had a spare bed was to take in a soldier or two. She faced him with blazing indignation, which in no way disturbed the courteous tone of the intruder.

'I have no room!'

'Here is a sofa, madame,' said he, looking in.

'A friend sleeps there; and if I had a hundred beds, they are not for Frenchmen.'

'If I were a Garibaldi man, I am sure madame would find room for me.'

'This is my house, monsieur, and I receive whom I please,' she retorted, fierce as a tigress.

'Where is the husband of madame?'

'I know not. I command here.'

'Ladies always do so, wherever they are,' replied the officer, with a bow.

'Monsieur,' she broke out, enraged beyond endurance, 'we are in the hands of Frenchmen, who profess to support liberty, equality, and fraternity; I do not understand what they have to do with a foreign republic, but I know this — if you come in, I go out.'

At this point, when even the urbane Frenchman was foiled by her red-hot indignation, another officer came in. She turned on him fiercely — 'Sir! this is not an inn!' He passed her, saying, 'Pardon, I seek friends,' and went straight to the apartment of Vincenzo and Irene, who had heard the angry colloquy. They were standing together, each seeming to support the other; Vincenzo nearly beside himself at his want of power to protect his sister. She recognised the new comer at once — 'Colonel de Crillon!' but she made no friendly movement.

'I come only to ask if I can be of any use or protection to you — I can at least prevent any one from being billeted upon you,' he said, with such unmistakable kindness and good-will, that Vincenzo replied, 'I accept that offer gratefully;' and he looked at his sister, feeling that it was indeed a valuable one.

'This will secure you,' said Colonel de Crillon, tearing from his pocket-book a leaf, on which he had written a line; 'and now I intrude no longer.'

'Oh, monsieur!' cried Irene, starting forward, 'stay; do you — do you know anything of a volunteer — Leone Nota? It is possible you may have seen him —'

'Nota, the *improvvisatore?*'

'Yes, yes, the same.'

'No; I have not seen nor heard of him lately.'

'Are you sure?' she asked, startled by his tone.

'On my word I have not. But I trust he is no relation of yours?' he added, with grave concern.

'I am his promised wife, monsieur.'

'Ah! pardon me. Then doubtless you know better than I do, why he is peculiarly obnoxious to the Papal Government, as I believe he is.'

'Only because all who have Italian hearts are obnoxious to it!' she cried.

Colonel de Crillon shook his head. 'It may be so, or he may have powerful enemies; but I chance to know that he would not be safe for a day in Rome. I should use such influence as I have in vain for him. Use all that you possess, mademoiselle, and urge him to escape while he can.'

'He has not been heard of since the assault,' she answered, leaning her face down upon a table near and pressing her hands convulsively over it.

Colonel de Crillon said no more; he felt that to leave the brother and sister alone was the truest kindness. In the passage he encountered Madama Cecchi, stately and fierce.

'Mademoiselle Mori may have spoken to you of me, madame?' said he.

'Mademoiselle Mori knows no one of your nation, monsieur!'

He passed out, and found the officer in the corridor who had attempted to billet himself upon her. 'Ha! De Crillon!' said he, 'here you are; how have you escaped the claws of that virago? — it is a she dragon! I wish you were billeted there, with all my heart, since you say you have friends there; as for me, I would rather sleep in the court-yard below.'

'Well, change rooms with me,' said the colonel, well pleased; 'mine is yonder.' And so it was settled, and the change enabled him to fulfil his kind desire to protect Irene from annoyance. In

the court-yard below, the soldiers were already established, and lighting fires, the smoke of which would have been a serious grievance to the inhabitants of the palace, had not all been too full of graver matters to think of it.

Towards evening another knock came to Vincenzo's door. Menica slowly opened a chink of it in fear and trembling. Her scream of joy brought Madama Cecchi. 'Where is my husband?' cried she, as soon as she saw who it was. But no answer could be given; nothing was known of Cecchi's fate.

This was Leone, though so much altered as scarcely to be recognisable, and Irene threw herself on his breast. He sank down on the sofa, holding her close, while she sobbed for joy, quite worn out with suspense and suffering. She suddenly lifted her head and exclaimed, 'You must not stay one moment; fly, fly, now, instantly, Leone; you are not safe here one instant. Think what a Roman tribunal is! If you love me, do not linger!'

'My cause is before a higher tribunal,' he answered faintly, but with a light in his eyes more like the look of a conqueror than that of a vanquished man. 'Dearest! I cannot live to see our Rome fallen.'

The words were uttered with difficulty. Irene started up and looked in his face. 'Leone, Leone! And I!'

There was such appealing desolation in her voice and face that it wrung Vincenzo's heart. Leone sought to draw her back to his side. 'Love, they thought me dead — I hardly know how I revived; but when I heard that the enemy were in our streets, and thought of you, alive or dead I must be beside you, Irene. But what can I do now I am come? Protect you little more than if I were still in the hospital! At least, however, we have met again, though it is only to part, my dearest.'

She wrung her hands and sprang to seek Madama Cecchi. 'A surgeon instantly. Leone is here; he is very ill — dying; my Leone is dying, dying!' she repeated wildly.

Madama Cecchi was sitting sunk in apathetic despair; she hardly seemed to hear. 'Whom can we send?' cried Irene desperately. 'Menica?'

'Oh, dear signorina, I would die to please you; but to venture among those French soldiers!'

Irene could not ask it. She felt, too, that if Nota's present abode were betrayed, he might be undone. There was none to aid, and none to be trusted.

So some days passed, and the city maintained its eloquent gloom. The French realized at last what they had absolutely refused to credit — that the defence was the act, not of a small tyrannical faction, but of a people. There was scarcely a woman in Rome who was not wearing mourning for a relative — scarcely a house which was not full of terrified forebodings, for a day of reckoning with the priests was at hand. In many palaces and private houses, soldiers had taken up their abodes, to the daily and infinite tribulation of the owners, who not only chafed and fretted at the yoke, but suffered from the free manners of the soldiers, though on the whole the discipline maintained was admirable. The women in Palazzo Clementi held them, however, in horror, and not a maid would venture down unprotected to fetch wood or water, or go forth into the city. Menica's beauty was a real misfortune to her, and she appeared in tears before her mistress, after having most reluctantly ventured down to the fountain one day; a soldier had kissed her — a frog of a Frenchman, she exclaimed, with abhorrent emphasis, which showed how trebled the offence was by his nationality.

Madama Cecchi started out of her now habitual apathy like a tiger. 'Log of wood that you are, girl, do you not wear a *spadone?*'

Menica put her hand up to the silver dagger in her hair, now long and thick again, with a look of intelligence, and when a half tipsy Frenchman attempted to catch hold of her the next day, she made no ado, but snatched out the *spadone* and struck him in the breast with all her might. Without waiting to see the result she fled back to her mistress, and told her what had happened. It brought Madama Cecchi to life again, for she perceived the danger that the girl had run into, and quickly made up her mind that she and Menica must be gone. She announced forthwith to Irene that they were about to take refuge with friends at Ostia. Irene heard, and felt the loss of her padrona as an additional drop in a cup of trial then very full, but could not remonstrate; and they went, returning no more for many

months, when fever and cholera had quite driven the soldiers from their unhealthy quarters at the bottom of the well-like quadrangle.

Madama Cecchi's weeping farewells to Irene were interrupted by the entrance of Gemma; it was the first time for a month that she had been outside her door. That month had changed her fearfully; she was haggard, though her eyes shone with fever; her features were pinched, her hands wasted, her very voice unlike itself. She almost forced Irene into her room, and exclaimed 'For charity's sake, tell me, do you know anything of Ravelli? Tell me, Irene, quick! speak!'

'Only that he is gone with Garibaldi,' answered Irene, regarding her with mingled pity and aversion.

'Gone! gone!' repeated Gemma. 'Ah, who comes here now?' and like a guilty thing she fled behind the curtain which hung over a door, as footsteps came near. Irene was not quite deserted; Signora Olivetti thought of her with affectionate sympathy, and not only ventured out to see her, but conquered her own reluctance to taking Imelda out of the security of her home, and brought her likewise, believing that the little one would be the best comforter. Irene welcomed them eagerly, but with alarm, knowing who was hidden near, and dreading above all things lest Gemma should discover that Leone was in the palace. Vincenzo was by his sick bed; they could venture to have neither physician nor attendant.

Amid all the sorrowful and gloomy faces, Imelda's countenance looked like a vision of peace herself. She nestled close to Irene caressingly, while her mother said, 'My poor Irene! are you left here alone?'

'Menica's old mother has promised to wait on us, dear signora.'

'But that is miserable! we came to persuade you to return with us to our house, dear child — you and Signor Mori. Come!'

'Thanks! thanks!' said Irene, with starting tears; 'one feels the value of friends now, but we cannot; we must stay here.'

'But why, *cuor mio*? Tell me, Irene, have you news of Signor Nota?'

Irene glanced round with anguish and terror which warned Signora Olivetti that her question was imprudent, though she could not guess that Leone had returned weary and wounded, only to die — that his betrothed was racked with fear lest his very deathbed should be violated by the vengeance of his enemies. Poor Irene! those were days which went near to break her heart. Signora Olivetti, with tact and skill, did not wait for her answer, but pursued, 'We met Padre Rinaldi, who bade us tell you he would soon be here. Even now he thinks of all but himself.'

'His sentence of exile has come already!' said Irene, and then, as if the words struggled forth against her will, she added, 'Oh, those are happy who lie dead under our walls! Manara is secure now, Dandolo and Morosini are safe, too — Donati is with them, Viola, Campana, Guerrieri, all gone! but those who remain — prison and exile for them! I would rather know them dead, too, than see those free hearts languishing in prison — prison for such as they! Oh, this life is very hard to bear!'

What could be said when all felt alike? Signora Olivetti could only show Irene the utmost sympathy and affection. When they were about to go, Imelda said, with her pretty, childish simplicity, 'Dear Irene, do you know that we have heard from Luigi? At least, his mother has a letter; he is in Tuscany, safe so far; he could only write just a line; but, Irene, he bade her tell me he had learnt much in the last month, and that I was to forgive him. I cannot think why he said so; but imagine his recollecting me in all his haste! Irene, I was so silly, so miserable, some time ago; I thought he loved Gemma Clementi instead of me, but you see I was wrong.' She looked very happy and glad as she spoke.

'Ah, Imelda will be happy, after all!' thought Irene, with a thrill of generous joy that drove away her own grief for a while. They went, and she hastily sought her first visitor.

Gemma was gone. Every word had reached her like a death-warrant. All was dizzy, whirling in her mind; she dashed out into the corridor, down the stairs, almost over some one whom she did not see. She stood in the open street, amid the driving rain, on the bank of the Tiber. One thought had filled her;

she looked hurriedly to sky and earth, grey alike; the dreary street was empty. She clasped her hands with a wild gesture over her head — another instant would have seen her plunge into the tawny waters, but a strong grasp caught her. She struggled fiercely, like a mad creature, for a few moments, then stood passive and exhausted in the hands of Padre Rinaldi, whom she had darted past on the stairs without recognising, without even seeing.

'Be still, mad girl!' he said, in a low deep voice; 'what! is this life unendurable, and would you enter on another which has no end?'

She looked up vacantly in his face; the passion-fit had passed and left her worn out. All power of volition had gone; she let him lead her, without asking whither, to a neighboring convent. The doors opened at his word, and she was admitted. There she lay on a sick-bed for months, between life and death.

She at length returned to her family, and afterwards married; but in those hollow, gleaming eyes and passion-wasted features, the most careless eye could read a strange tale. She became noted for her ascetic devotion, and gave continually and largely to a convent, where, it was rumored, she had once spent many months after some startling event in her life, but her history was fully known to none, though all were well aware that the Countess Gemma was an unhappy woman.

Colonel de Crillon did not forget Irene. Had he not used his great influence in her behalf, she and Vincenzo would have suffered for the part they had taken in politics; and, as it was, a prohibition was passed by the head of the police when Pio Nono returned, against the reappearance on the Roman stage of the young actress whose name might recall to the Romans their days of liberty. It was an unnecessary precaution! Irene was dead as a Roman cantatrice; her life had passed into another channel; Rome was to see its favorite no more.

The French officer proved a loyal and unwearied friend to her on many occasions, as long as their paths lay together, and he did more than defend her at a distance. It was with hurried and anxious steps that he came one day to her door and asked for her. The old woman, who was now their sole attendant,

opened to him, but perplexed by the foreign accent stared at him uncomprehending, and finally called Irene. She came, pale as death, her eyes heavy and dim, and stood silently awaiting what he had to say.

'Mademoiselle,' he hurriedly began, 'I told you that I could not protect Signor Nota — I ask nothing; I wish to know nothing about him; but as a friend I warn you that his retreat is discovered. If you can communicate with him — I do not ask where he is, remember — tell him he will be seized immediately unless he conceals himself elsewhere. I told you that he had a powerful enemy!'

A light broke from her eyes; a flash of mingled sadness and triumph.

'Thanks, kind friend! He has escaped.'

'Ah! that is well!' said Colonel de Crillon, much relieved.

'Yes, he has escaped. Will you follow me?' she said.

He did so, with sudden misgivings.

She entered a room where lay a still form with features fixed in changeless repose. The sound of her gliding step and of the soldier's tread did not reach that ear, brought no change on that pale face. Yes, Leone had escaped. In the land where he had taken refuge, slave and patriot are alike secure; under the shadow of its King all are safe; no tyrant can pursue his victim thither; and no earthly monarch dare assault that realm; for the lord of it is Death; and Irene laid her head down on the heart that should never beat any more, even for her, even for Italy — and murmured, 'I thank Thee, my God! I thank Thee!'

CONCLUSION.

Two years later there was exhibited in London a panorama of Rome. Few visited it so often and with such interest as Mrs. Dalzell, who was then residing in London. In one of her visits she was struck with a young foreigner, who stood gazing upon it with an intensity which showed that no passing feeling was roused by it. Only his dark profile was visible to her, but in it and in his attitude was a depth of melancholy which was striking and painful even to a careless spectator. She asked a question concerning him in an under voice of the showman who stood by. He shrugged his shoulders — 'There has hardly been a day that he has not been here. Leicester Square, no doubt.' The Italian roused himself the next moment and looked towards Mrs. Dalzell, who had an impression that she knew him, but hesitated to identify this worn and saddened man with the gay youth who once had passed a summer afternoon with her party on the turf of Villa Borghese. Time had not, however, altered her, had not ruffled her smooth brow, nor dimmed her blue eyes, nor brought a grey hair among her soft braids; and in the sweet Roman Italian which she knew so well, he said at once, 'Does the Signora Dalzell remember me?' 'Signor Ravelli!' she exclaimed, with cordiality, which called the sudden Italian smile over his countenance. He had been one of those very few of the Garibaldi legion who reached a safe asylum. Arrived in Paris, he clubbed his finances with the slender means of four other refugees, and in a Parisian garret they lived more cheerfully than perhaps would be easily credited. But ere long the exile's longing for home awoke, and he found his way for a while into Piedmont, to be at least nearer to his birthplace. Passing

through Geneva, he came strangely and unexpectedly on some slight traces of Cecchi, who had courted death madly in the siege, but in vain, and afterwards disappeared. He had fled to Geneva, but even the doctrines of Calvin soon grew as abhorrent to him as those of Rome, and he went on a fancied mission of preaching from place to place, proclaiming frantic doctrines devised by his own disordered brain. He wandered about Switzerland and Piedmont for a time, and then was seen no more, and whatever his final fate might be, it was never known at Rome.

Luigi had now arrived in London, to aid, as far as he could, his fellow exiles less well off than himself. He at least need not have suffered from poverty; for his family transmitted money to him constantly, though their resources were crippled by the heavy fine which Luigi's part in politics brought upon them. All he had to spend speedily went to relieve old friends — there were but too many who needed it; but those who were on free soil were fortunate, for others had met with a sadder fate. Mrs. Dalzell asked after one remembered name and another — 'Dead — shot by the Austrians — in prison — disappeared' — came the answers, till she shrank from asking more. One name was uppermost in their minds, but neither could trust themselves to speak it, though when both paused and were silent, each knew that the other was thinking of him who lay in a lonely, unmarked grave in the Roman cemetery. Unmarked, but not unhonored, for long after those who had best loved Leone had left Rome, that grave was still strewn, as the anniversary of the siege came round, by unknown hands which no spy could ever succeed in detecting, with flowers forming the three colors of Italy. All around the gate of San Pancrazio rise dark green mounds above the bones of the Romans who fell there, for Pio Nono had no sympathy with his Romans, but reserved it all for the French, to whom he raised costly monuments; but the ground where patriots lie is hallowed for ever — holy as the consecrated earth where Leone sleeps. The secret of his resting-place is kept deep in many hearts, though only the priest and the woman who loved him above all things on earth stood beside it when he was laid there. But still the Romans call it, in

hushed tones, when only the trustworthy can hear, 'The Grave of our Poet!'

Luigi could not speak of his lost friend, but he asked after Irene. Mrs. Dalzell gave him the last letter she had received from her, and bade him come to her house to read it. Those hospitable doors were always open to him from that day, and he gained an insight into English manners and English tones of thought such as few foreigners attain. At that house he met sensible, earnest-minded men, from whom he learnt what freedom truly meant. When, after another year of exile, the united wealth and interest of the Olivetti and Ravelli families succeeded in obtaining permission for his return, he did not refuse to accept it, but went back a wiser man, with views that had become more sober and more practical, though the patriot heart beat high as ever. Imelda had not married; she was faithful to the love of her childhood, and in her he had the most true and affectionate wife that ever man was blest with.

He did not find Vincenzo and Irene in Rome. Irene's love had combined the constancy of the north with the passion of the south, and after Leone's death she drooped as if heart and spirit alike were broken. Vincenzo's own deep grief was put aside by anxiety for her, and gratitude and affection for him seemed the one thread that still bound her to life. All Rome was full of mourning and desolation, fines and proscriptions. Fathers, mothers, wives called for sons and husbands, banished, killed, imprisoned; liberty lay dead in a double chain, and every improvement that the republic had introduced was swept away, destroyed as completely as the stately road that it had commenced beside the Tiber — as if by this wholesale sweep the recollection of all that had come and gone could be effaced from the minds of the Romans. But the brother and sister lived, for a time, apparently forgotten, in their corner of the old palace; the storm had overwhelmed them and returned no more. It might however have been otherwise had they had no protector; for Clementi, though absent, was still powerful, and might yet have tortured Irene through Vincenzo. He never dared to return to Rome. Crushed as the Romans were, not a babe on its mother's breast, to use Madama Cecchi's energetic expression,

but would have had a dagger for him had he reappeared; and still with abhorrence they point out Palazzo Clementi as 'the dwelling of the Traitor!'

When life began to reassert itself in Irene's breast, it was in a wish to leave Rome, but she remembered her brother's frequent assertions that he could not live elsewhere, and did not utter her desire. It was Vincenzo himself who first proposed to go. Rome was no more Rome to him in the mist of blood and tears that shrouded her. His friends were banished, proscribed, dead. Padre Rinaldi had been long since sent into exile. Vincenzo became eager to take his sister away. His thoughts turned to Mrs. Dalzell and their father's English home. They went there, and later to Germany, whence Madame Marriotti had been incessantly writing to beseech her pupil to come to her. After a time Irene returned to her profession. The world has since learnt her name; she has won fame such as never visited her even in the radiant visions of her childhood; she is loved and honored in private life by those who have the privilege of knowing her and the brother who is wrapped up in her. She is devoted to her art and is happy; but the gladness of her girlhood perished in the siege of Rome; and deep in her heart lies the thought of Leone; only Vincenzo and her art can find a place there besides. But those who see the calmness and peace on her fair brow would find it hard to believe how stormy was the youth of Irene Mori.

THE END.